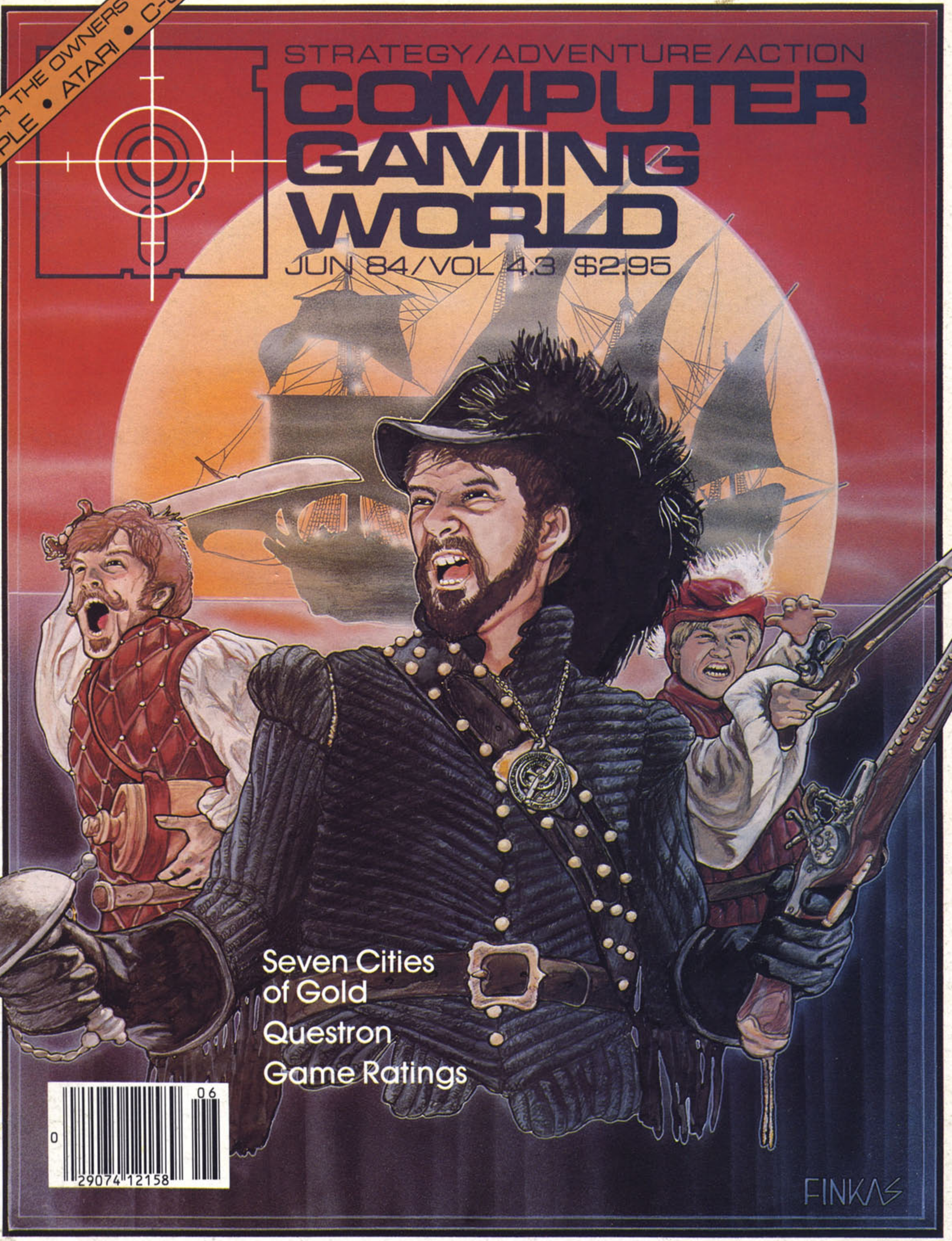
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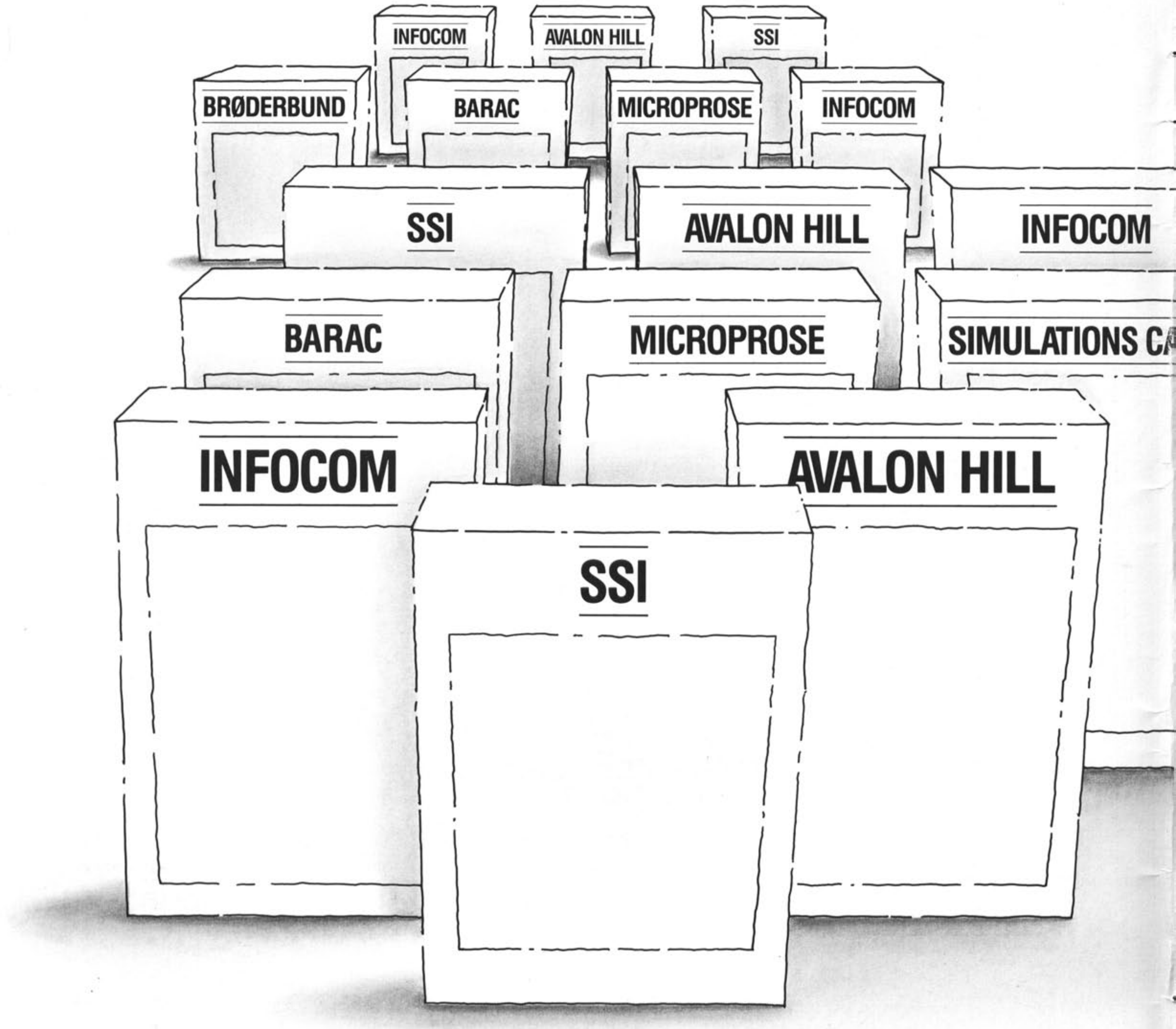
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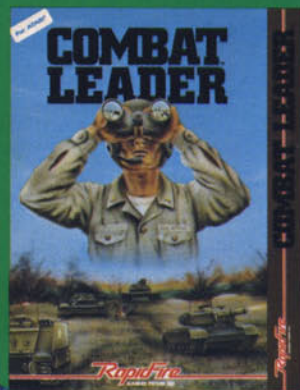
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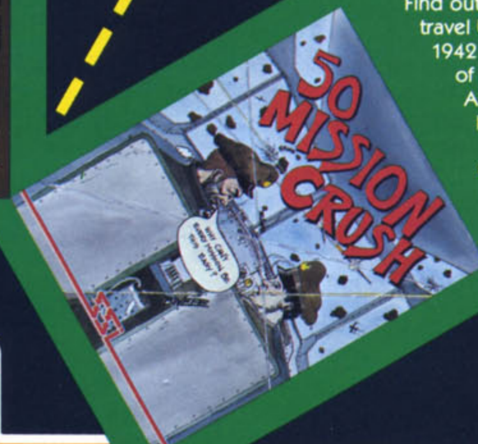
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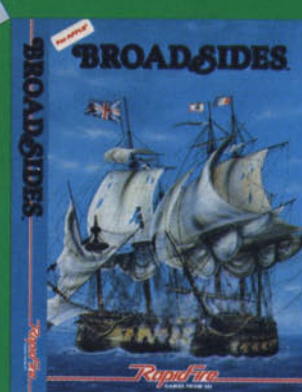




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Avalon Hill Game Co.
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COMPUTER TITLE BOUT: Avalon Hill's popular board game is now on the Atari home computer. A statistics based boxing simulation that contains stats for over 300 historical fighters. Instructions are included for creating your own fighters. $30.00.

JUPITER MISSION 1999: A four disk interactive space adventure for the Atari home computer. The game is made up of 11 programs which combine arcade segments, puzzles, and adventure elements to make a challenging game. Look for a review in a future issue. $50.00.

Davka Corp.
845 North Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL

I.Q. BASEBALL: Here is something different. Test your knowledge of baseball as you play the game. You can choose between 'Major League' or 'Minor League' questions (although we know baseball fairly well, we found some of the minor league questions quite difficult. The questions will challenge even baseball fanatics). Correctly answering questions gets you hits (if you are 'up') or creates outs (if you are in the field). You can play against another person or against the computer. Supplemental questions diskettes available. Apple.

Epyx Computer Software
1043 Kiel Court
Sunnyvale, CA 94089

DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN: Fans of Anne McCaffrey's books will find much enjoyment in this computerized version of the PERN saga. The game centers around the diplomacy and negotiations that occur among the Weyrs and the people. The standard game also includes thread fighting (in arcade style of course). You need to do well in negotiations to win the game, but failure to stop the thread invasions can destroy your diplomatic efforts. One to four players. Atari.

FTL Games
7907 Ostrow St. Suite F
San Diego, CA 92111

SUNDOG: Even though Sundog was designed by one of our regular columnists (Bruce Webster's *Silicon Cerebrum* covers artificial intelligence in computer gaming); we feel we are unbiased and accurate when we say that this game is a real winner. *Sundog:Frozen Legacy* is a science fiction adventure game in which you a star freighter captain fulfilling a contract to help establish a religious colony. The ZoomAction graphics are outstanding and the game system presents many interesting challenges as you seek to fulfill the conditions of your contract. But watch out! Pirates and muggers will seek to waylay you. A review is coming but don't wait. At $40 this is one of the best buys around. Apple II series (look for a Macintosh version early in 1985).

Funsoft
28611 Canwood St.
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

FLAK: You fly your AGX fighter over 28 continuous game screens as you seek to penetrate past intelligent flak batteries and destroy Computer Control (perhaps an appeal to the computerphobia in each of us?). One or two players and two levels of play. Apple, Atari, C-64 and PCjr. $34.95.

Infocom
55 Wheeler St.
Cambridge, MA 02138

SORCERER: This is the second release in Infocom's *Enchanter* series of adventures in the mystic arts. The Enchanter series goes



COMPUTER TITLE BOUT



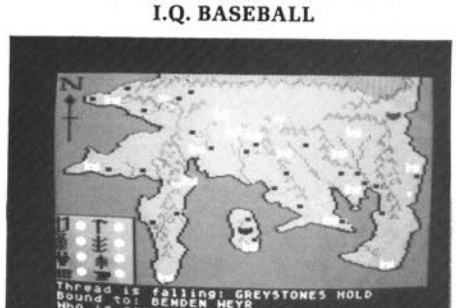
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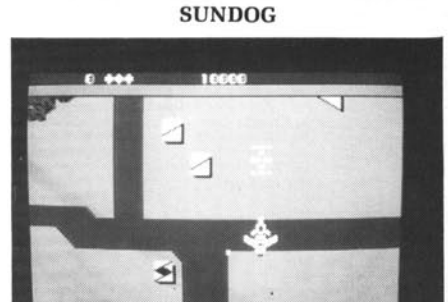
SUNDOG



JUPITER MISSION 1999



DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN



FLAK

beyond the Zorks and gives players a new type of challenge, reaching goals through the use of magical powers they acquire along the way. Many systems. $49.95.

KRENtek Software
P.O. BOX 3372
Kansas City, KA 66103

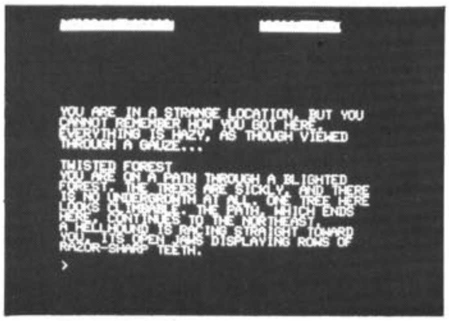
NAPOLEON AT WATERLOO: A simulation of Napoleon's final climatic battle at Waterloo. Scrolling graphics cover the entire battlefield. Each unit is rated for both fire power and moral. Don't let the low cost packaging fool you, this game is better than average. Atari. $35.00.

ROME AND THE BARBARIANS: An "Eastern Front" style game in which you, as Emperor, attempt to preserve the Empire by using loyal Roman troops to defeat Barbarians and traitorous Roman legions. Military, economic and diplomatic elements must be manipulated in the game. Atari. $35.00.

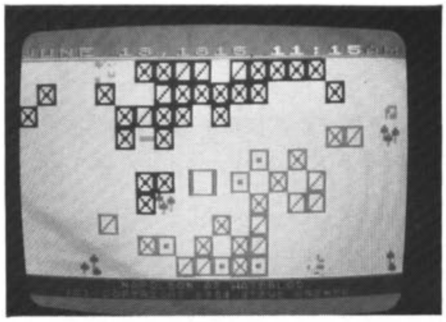
Mind Systems
P.O. Box 506
Northhampton, MA 01061

AIRSIM-3: A detailed flight simulator which was developed as an aid to pilots who wish to use their home computer as an aid for practicing instrument flying. Airsim-3 allows the user to fly a high performance light aircraft up and down the California coast. In addition to the practice landing field, six airports between San Francisco and San Diego are in the program and you can fly between any of them. AIRSIM-3 includes the standard instrumentation (airspeed, turn indicator, attitude indicator, compass heading, altimeter, climb-rate indicator, throttle setting, engine RPM) plus all instrumentation required for navigation and instrument-flying practice (ADF, HSI/VOR, VOR, DEM, OM, and MM displays). The program allows a pilot to set up a customized instrument approach anywhere in the world. Apple.

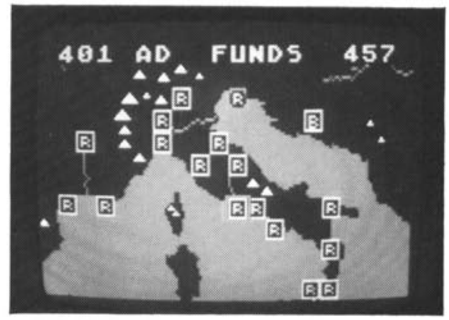
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SORCERER



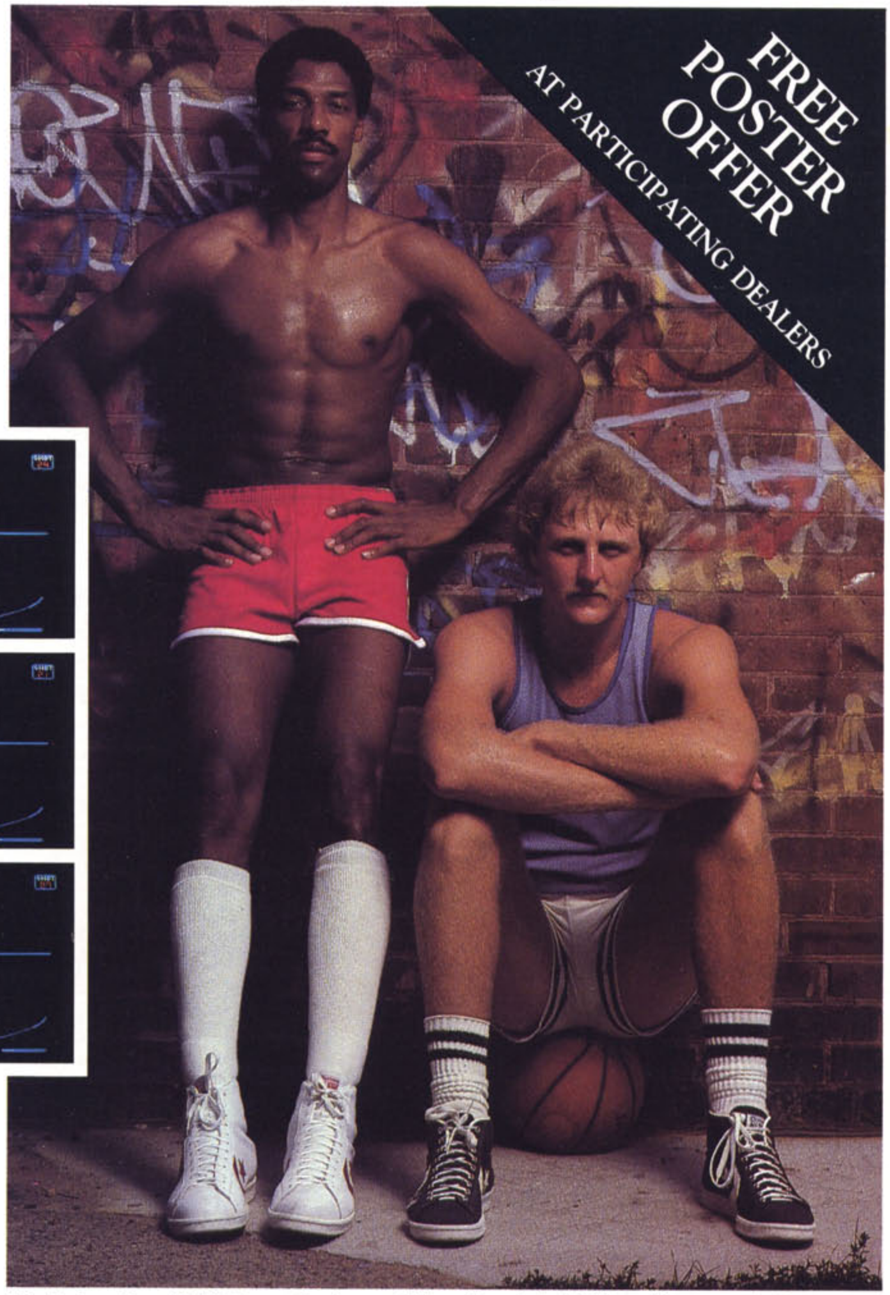
NAPOLEON AT WATERLOO



ROME AND THE BARBARIANS

SOFTWARE ARTISTS?

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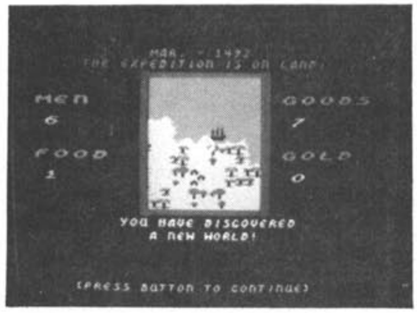
ELECTRONIC ARTS™



Seven Cities of Gold

by Sandra Carlisle

NAME:	**Seven Cities of Gold**
TYPE:	**Strategy**
SYSTEM:	**Atari (C-64 coming)**
FORMAT:	**Disk**
AUTHOR:	**Ozark Softscape**
#PLAYERS:	**One**
PRICE:	**$40**
PUBLISHER:	**Electronic Arts Menlo Park, CA**



The following article comes from a playtester of SEVEN CITIES OF GOLD. She combines a good overview of the game with insights to the game from Dan Bunten of Ozark Softscape. Due, in part, to the length of this article, Dan Bunten's regular column, DISPATCHES, will not appear in this issue.

The month is March. The year 1492. I am triumphantly standing before the Royal Palace. This time I have finally convinced the King of Spain to finance my expedition. The two thousand in gold has been used to purchase four ships, a full complement of sailors, 100 soldiers, food for 52 weeks, and 300 lots of goods for trading.

I pass the Outfitters Shop, but decide that for my first trip I had better go with my present equipment. Next, I see my flag ship—an impressive three-master. With a push of the joystick button I leave Spain and head west into the unknown. Anxiously, the weeks pass by, with still no land sign of land. Suddenly, the long awaited cry is heard from the crow's nest. *Land Ho!* There it is .... China!

I eagerly give the command to anchor off the lush coast. With my men carrying as much food and goods as possible, I lead them ashore. A fanfare sounds as I receive credit for discovering the New World. *(Well, perhaps this isn't China after all.)* Avoiding the swamps, the expedition locates a native village. They are not hostile but curious, and in their excitement crowd too close. One of my men, out of fear, hurts one of the natives. To placate them, I offer a gift which they quickly take. I ask to trade, but am informed that I must speak to their chief. Carefully moving through the village, the chief is finally located. Giving him a gift, I again try to trade . . .**GOLD!** They have gold! I quickly trade for a few pieces and head back to the ships. Having been given native bearers at the village, much more may now be carried.

We pause to look around. Excitedly, the word is passed to me that the natives have mentioned a gold mine located to the east of the village. Encouraged, we force march through the swamp and find the mine. Gathering all the gold we can carry, I again turn toward the ships.

After loading the gold and getting more goods, the expedition returns to the village. Now that I know my way around, I head directly for the chief. This time he is greedy, and will not trade until given four more gifts. I trade for the rest of the village's gold and leave. Since this is a small island with only the one village, I decide to set sail again.

Sailing north around the island I locate more land to the northwest. Heading that way, the lookout spots a native village, but I decide to continue sailing west off the coast. Is this another island, or is it a continent? I see two more villages, then the coastline suddenly dips to the south and eventually back to the east .... another island. There is yet one more island to the south of this one. A very small one with no villages.

It is now July. I stop to check my maps and to take a bearing. It shows me to be at latitude 20 degrees north, and in the middle of an island group. Somehow it looks familiar. *(I check an atlas and recognize Cuba, Jamaica, and Hispaniola. Ah ha, now I know where I am!)*

After sailing back to where the two villages were located close together on Cuba, I disembark and head for the chief. But, wait....these natives are hostile. I quickly drop a gift. Bought off, they eventually settle down. Now I can look for the chief. Finding him, I try to amaze him, but only manage to drive the others away. I trade for all of the gold available, and then go back to the ships for more goods. With only 81 goods left, I am hoping for the best.

Leaving the ships, I stop to think. While stopped, one of the natives mentions another gold mine to the south. More gold! I quickly head for it. Once there, I decide to

leave it until after visiting the other village. Leaving the mine, I notice that an *X* marks the location of the mine on the map. Entering the village, I immediately amaze the natives to get them away from me. I rush through the gap formed and confront the chief. I try to amaze him but to no apparent effect. I attempt to trade with marvelous results. The chief is so impressed with me that he asks me to build a mission! On top of this he offers me anything in the village.

Leaving enough men behind to staff the mission, I take all of the gold and some of their food. I make certain, though, to leave enough food behind for my men. Returning to the gold mine, I mine all the gold available and return to the ships.

Deciding to go south to check the third village on this island, I move them overland at a moderate pace. Entering the village at this speed, my men accidentally kill several natives. Suddenly, my men have drawn their swords and the natives are on us like a swarm of angry hornets. Fighting desperately, we manage to defeat the village, and can take what we want. I take all of the gold and leave. After leaving, however, I realize that we need more food. We return to the village, ready for a battle but, to our surprise, the natives run away. As soon as I approach the chief, he informs us that we may take anything we like as tribute. I order some food collected and leave enough men to form a fort.

It is now November. In seven months I have learned how to survive in the New World through trading and fighting.

I've also learned the wisdom of listening to the native bearers. A total of two gold mines have been discovered, a mission has been established and a fort built to hold down the locals. With new confidence, I set sail to further explore this New World.

All this and more happened to me the first time I sat down to play **SEVEN CITIES OF GOLD**(SCOG). No matter how many times I booted the game up to test it, I always found it exciting and compelling to play (usually ending up playing far longer than planned). There was always one more mountain to cross, one more river to explore, or one more gold mine to find. Unlike most games, there are no set solutions or predetermined goals. There is no puzzle to solve which, once solved, ends the game's mystery. Every time that I played the game was different. I have never, for example, found all of the gold mines. Also, for the determined searchers, the *historical* game contains a lost village on an uncharted island.

SCOG is a game full of adventure, treasures, and discovery. It has animation, excellent graphics, arcade-type action, strategy and challenge. The game is a believable simulation of the Spanish discovery and conquest of the New World. In it you are an explorer in the 16th Century with the goal being to travel west in search of fame and fortune. The depth and variety of SCOG rivals that of the better written text games. The game has the equivalent of **2,800 screens**! The playfield from a 13 inch TV, if printed, would form a giant mural of approximately 12 by 19 feet. It is so vast, that it has been estimated that it would take over eight hours in order to transit every sector of land without stopping. In the game, I could sail my ships from Newfoundland to the Straights of Magellan and up the Pacific coast to Alaska. This map is not just one simple 5-10K load, but occupies approximately 65K of disk memory. However, not only is there the Historical world to rediscover, SCOG has a *Random World*option which enables it to create entirely NEW worlds to conquer.

SCOG comes in the usual Electronic Arts package with excellent documentation. The cover is a beautiful reproduction of a 16th Century painting showing the Spanish Conquistadors landing in the New World. The game begins with an wonderful opening sequence accompanied by a piece of period Spanish music called *"La Bomba"*. Although the documentation is only ten pages long, it is complete and enjoyable to read. It contains numerous playing tips, historical notes and even a bibliography for those interested in further research. Designed to be a *real-time* adventure with the excitement of discovery and achievement, they deliberately made the instructions into guidelines rather than rules.

The sound in the game is definitely understated, but effective in conveying information. A short fanfare is, for example, played when a discovery is made. When your expedition is moving on land, you hear the sound of marching men. The speed of he men is directly proportional to the tempo of the sound. When you enter a village, you immediately hear drumbeats, the intensity of which

notifies you of the natives level of hostility. And, in water, you hear the sound of waves rushing past your ship. In the shallows, this sound increases to warn you of the danger of grounding.

Historically, the major problem faced by the Spanish explorers was food supply. I found the same to be true for my expeditions. Once in the new world, the only additional food was in the native villages. The subtlety of this game really became apparent when I had to deal with the natives. There is no common language. How could I communicate with a totally alien culture. The many variables possible give the game its authenticity, its flavor and its challenge. I could slaughter and plunder, try trickery or treachery, or simply trade for my most pressing needs. If I desired, I could even try to convert the natives and establish missions. Success with any of the nethods chosen will depend upon your dexterity in fighting or in your skill in negotiations. It will also depend upon the type of village with which you are dealing. And, no matter how many times you play the same map, none of the villages will ever be exactly the same.

The game has three distinct levels. The beginner is well advised to start at the *Novice* level, where you have a chance to survive long enough to get a feel for the game. At the next level, *Journeyman*, you have to contend with storms at sea, native ambushes, food spoilage, ship wrecks, or even with your ships disappearing under the command of mutinous officers and crew. At the highest level, *Master*, all of the above happens but with greater frequency. Also, at either level above novice, the native villages are not seen. They can only be located by stopping and looking for "signs".

There are three different sequences in the game, with different types of screens for each. The game begins in the **European Sequence** with you in Spain as a full sized animated character dressed as a Spanish Conquistador. Here you can outfit your expeditions, visit your home to view the map created on your journeys, visit the Royal Court for additional funds, higher titles, etc...., or visit the Pub to save the game. Every place you visit in Europe takes time off your "game clock". For example, you could spend three game months waiting for an audience with the King. Also, each ship you buy adds one month to your outfitting time.

Once you board your ship, you have entered the **Expedition Sequence**. The expedition, marked on the screen by a compass with a red arrow, may travel on land or on water. While in this sequence, the screen always shows the number of men remaining in the expedition, weeks of food, and the amount of goods and gold.You can, at any time, stop your expedition to check your maps. The game has two map sizes. The playfield in which you are currently traveling is reduced on the *expedition map* to show a much larger area (the *game map* you see in Europe is reduced several times again, allowing you to view the whole Western Hemisphere).

The last sequence appears when you enter a village. In the **Village Sequence**, the playfield seems to "blow-up" and suddenly you (again, as a full-sized animated character) are on the edge of a village with the natives (also full-sized characters) all around you. This also happens if you are ambushed by natives. In the Village Sequence, your single animated character represents you and all of your men, no matter how many your expedition contains.

Since this is a "real-time" simulation game, you will notice that time passes while you are exploring, food is being eaten, and your men mysteriously die. Time does not, however, pass while you are in a village, looking at maps, or in the transfer menus. If you march your men through swamps or mountains, additional men may die from injuries incurred while fighting.

When you are moving your expedition on land or in a village, you have three speeds from which to choose: *Cautious*, *Moderate*, or *Reckless*. Reckless means, as you might guess, acting without regard for safety or life. If you use this speed when traveling over land, particularly in swamps or mountains, it will increase the loss of your men. Reckless is the speed to use if you are fighting natives, but your men will have to rest frequently if you drive them too hard.

Moderate is the best speed for moving over land. You can move your men at this pace for long periods without

Continued on page 40



INSIDE THE INDUSTRY

by Dana Lombardy

This issue our survey asks the readers of CGW where they buy their computer games, and how many games (on average) they buy each month.

Our first question deals with the different categories of computer games. If you remember the list published in the last issue (April 1984), there are roughly five different categories of computer games: adventure (role-playing); wargame; arcade; abstract; and sports and other strategy.

Adventure computer games include: Zork; Ultima; Wizardry; and Suspended. Computer wargames include: Robotwar; Cosmic Balance; Eastern Front; Combat Leader; Close Assault; Operation Whirlwind; and North Atlantic '86. Computer arcade games include: Choplifter; Lode Runner; Pac Man; Lunar Leeper; and Frogger. Abstract computer games include: Sargon; Fortress; Pensate; and other chess and backgammon style games. Sports and other strategy computer games include: Computer Baseball; Facts in Five; Cartels & Cutthroats; and M.U.L.E.

The above list is a short guideline. See the April 1984 issue for additional titles and details.

Part I (Question 1)

Write the letter of the *one type* of computer game that's your *favorite* (you play most often):

A. Adventure
B. Wargame
C. Arcade
D. Abstract
E. Sports/Other

Part II (Questions 2 - 7)

Check each of the following places from which you buy your computer games *regularly* (at least once a month):

Use R.I.D. card in the back of magazine to respond to this survey.

2. Direct from software publisher
3. Mail order house
4. Computer hardware & software store
5. Computer software store
6. Hobby or game store
7. Other type of store (department, toy, etc.)

Part III (Question 8)

Write the number of the *one* place you buy your computer games from *most often*:

2. Direct from software publisher
3. Mail order house
4. Computer hardware & software store
5. Computer software store
6. Hobby or game store
7. Other type of store (department, toy, etc.)

Part IV (Question 9)

Write the number of computer games you *buy* every month (average).

Part V (Question 10)

Write the number of computer games you *copy* from someone else's disk or tape that they've purchased.

Thanks for participating in this survey. We'll have the results of last issue's survey, as well as this one, in the next two issues of CGW.

ENCHANTER

Scorpion's Tale

As told by Scorpia

Back from the depths of space at last, I see! Well, your favorite chair (and brew!) is waiting; you'll need a breather before embarking on your next journey: an adventure into the realm of magic and wizardry, a trip to the world of ... the *Enchanter*!

So there you are, spellbook in hand, fresh from a summons from the mighty Circle of Enchanters, wondering if you should have listened to Momma and gone into alligator-wrestling. Fear not! While destroying the evil and powerful Krill is no mean feat, it only looks impossible! However, time passes in this game rather quickly, so you best get a move on (no, NOT west!).

Before you go running off to the castle, it's a good idea to check out the countryside very thoroughly. You're going to be needing food and drink, and Krill is not noted for his hospitality to his enemies. So stock up on supplies while you can. Then, it's off to see the Wizard! Well, perhaps not quite. There ARE one or two things you need to do before you finally have a showdown with Krill. The first one is getting into the castle itself, but that isn't hard. Check your spells, because that's all you'll have to rely on in this game, and you should have the gate open in no time. Once inside, take your time and explore the environs carefully. You'll want to find a comfy place to spend a night or two; who knows, you might even have some sweet dreams as well! Actually, you can sleep just about anywhere, but some places are better than others.

As you map out the castle and adjacent areas, you will come across a number of strange creatures. Some are helpful, some hostile, and a few are only red herrings. The general rule of thumb is: if you can't do anything with/about it, forget it. Just remember it's important to talk to the animals!

On your way to your confrontation with Krill, you will be picking up a few scrolls. Almost all will be useful to you in one way or another, so *Gnusto* them as you find them. Of course, not all the scrolls will be easy to come by! For instance, there's a scroll in the Control Room that seems impossible for you to obtain safely. Naturally, it's also one of the most important spells in the game. How can you get it? Well, you'll need a little help from a friend. Think about it, slowly, and the answer may come to you.

Then there's that box in the closet! All tied up with magical string, and no apparent way of getting it open. You're just dying to know how to get rid of the string, right? Well, think sharp, and don't be afraid to make a sacrifice or two on this one! While we're still talking about mysterious objects, there's that jeweled egg in one of the towers (shades of Zork I!). There's two ways of getting it open, but both will produce the same result, namely confetti. Don't be alarmed, you have some friends who can help you with this problem as well.

There are also some very interesting places in the castle, as well. The dungeon, for instance, should be given a good look. The Gallery is another room that bears close examination. However, you will probably want to stay out of the temple, at least for now. And then there's everyone's favorite, the Guarded Door. You'll get by with a little help from your (slightly greedy) friend.

Everyone always wants to know about the Translucent Rooms. The first thing to do is look at the book in the library; it makes for informative reading. Then you need a map and something to doodle with. Once you have those, it's a matter of careful timing, so you might want to plan your moves out ahead of time. It's best to save the game first, though, or you might find yourself branded a menace to society!

Another problem everybody asks about are the Endless Stairs. Well, they really are endless! You could go up or down them for hours and hours, and not get anywhere. Which means, of course, there's a lot more here than meets the eye! This, in fact, is the last puzzle of the game to solve before meeting Krill. The solution is a long and complex one. Before you do anything, however, you might want to memorize a few spells, just in case. You never know what might happen!

So, at last you stand in Krill's sanctum! Of course, you'll have to take care of a couple of his friends before you can deal with the wizard himself. But if you came properly prepared, that shouldn't be too hard. In fact, if you've gotten this far, you probably have the means of banishing Krill once and for all. And there's no margin for error here, no time to lose; wait too long, and you'll miss your chance to save the world. So cast your spells carefully!

Ah, victory! However, don't go sitting on your laurels just yet, my friend! There's more work to be done, as you'll find out next time, when you move up to the rank of.... *Sorcerer*! While you worry about that, I'll give out some miscellaneous clues to other adventure problems that have some people stumped.

□ □ □

ADVENTURE: Can't do anything with the snake? You'll get past with some help from a little friend. **BLADE OF BLACKPOOLE**: Carnivorous plant giving you fits? Find something it wants to eat, and be sweet about it. **INFIDEL**: Can't get the scales straight? It helps to be in your cups. **WIZARD AND THE PRINCESS**: So you have no money for the peddler? Somewhere, over the....

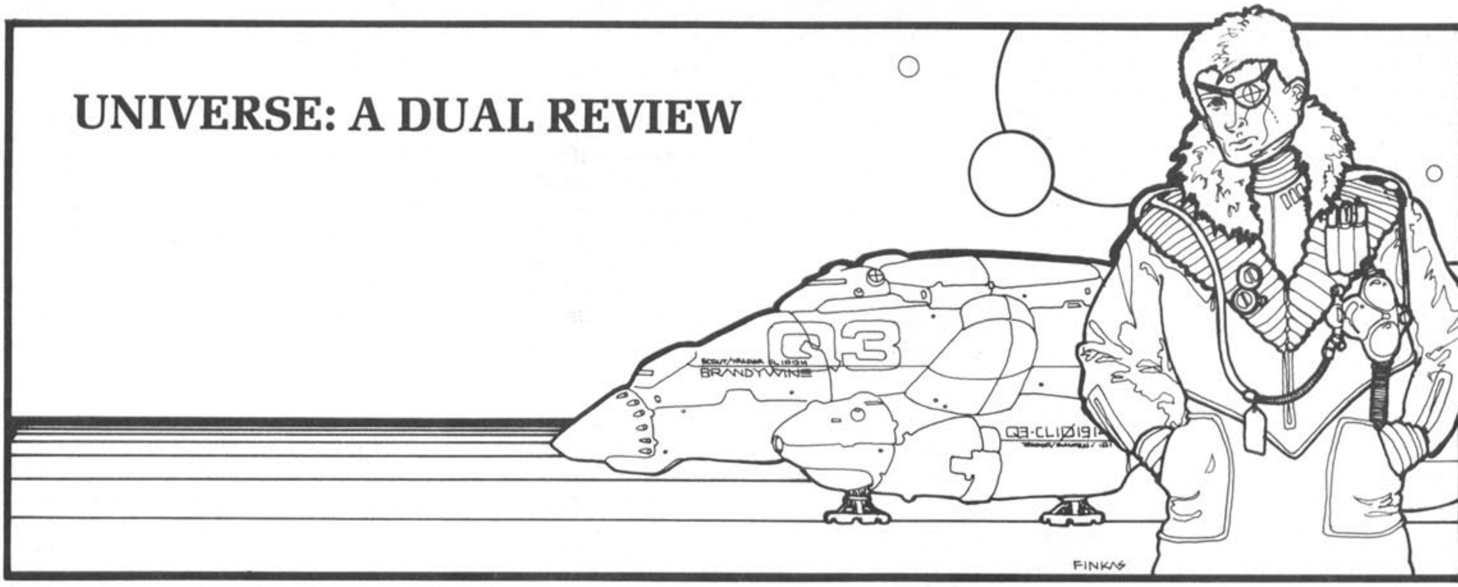
**** IMPORTANT NOTE! ****

Once again, my mailing address has changed (don't groan!). This one, however, should last quite awhile longer than the others! The new address is:

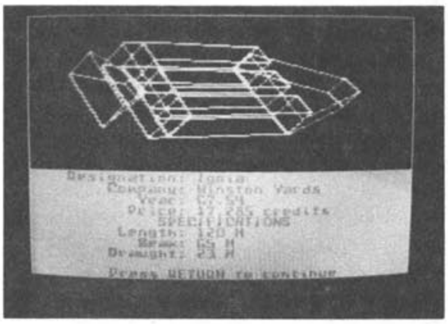
Scorpia P.O. Box 338 Gracie Station NY NY 10028

In the meantime, if you sent mail to the other address (the one given in my Starcross column), don't worry; that box will be good until the end of June. Sorry for all the switching around, but things should be stable from now on. Thanks for your patience! (And don't forget you can reach me on the Source at User ID ST 1030, and on CompuServe page GAM-310).

UNIVERSE: A DUAL REVIEW



NAME:	**Omnitrend's Universe**
TYPE:	**Interactive Adventure**
SYSTEM:	**Atari**
FORMAT:	**4 Disks (48K)**
# PLAYERS:	**1**
AUTHORS:	**Thomas R. Carbone William G.M. Leslie III**
PRICE:	**$89.95**
PUBLISHER:	**Omnitrend Software West Simsbury, CT**



For the past several months CGW has received R.I.D. cards requesting a review of Omnitrend's Universe. *We knew little knowledge about* Universe *prior to these requests, so we were curious. Before we could investigate, two unsolicited reviews came in on the game. With reviews in hand we took a look at the game itself and have come to the conclusion that* Universe *is quite a work. Here then, if you will allow us, are two views of the* Universe.

Review by Nick Fitzsimmons

UNIVERSE.... the very name evokes an image of a vast, unlimited, all-encompassing grandeur.... like looking up into the starry sky.

It takes a certain amount of nerve to name a computer game **UNIVERSE**. Particularly when you are a new company, and are writing it for the Atari computer, which some people consider to be an "off-brand." I mean, really, who are these people anyway?

Well, ladies and gents, these people are from OMNITREND, and they picked the right name and the right computer. Despite limited promotion to date, *Universe* has already acquired an avid following that may rival the fanatics who have made *Zork* a household word.

Before you ask yourself "Why on earth would I spend $89.95 on a game?," let's see what it includes. To begin with, the packaging and documentation is superb. Packed in a box suitable for shipping sheet metal, the first thing you notice upon opening the box is the padded 8½" × 11" three ring binder; containing four disks. The binder is printed with a nicely understated *Universe* logo, and is designed to be used upright as an easel. Once inside the binder, you want documentation right? Well you certainly get it. A total of 75 pages of it, all neatly separated by tabbed dividers and including twelve pages of quick reference cards.

You no doubt will have noticed by now that I haven't discussed what the game is about or even what type of game it is. At this point, I'm *still* not sure what type of game it is. I'm tempted to call it either a simulation or a role-playing game. However, when I was forced to describe it to someone else, I resorted to, "Well, it's like life."

In the introduction, there appears a brief history of the Local Group star cluster that could have been written by Larry Niven or Robert Heinlein. The Local Group is accessible from Earth only by the use of the Hyperspace Booster, an alien device discovered more than 200 years ago. Unfortunately the Booster is one-way only, and so the colonies of the Local Group are dependent upon ships from earth for new technology.

However, all is not well. Some planets in the Local Group are beginning to regress. Slavery and piracy are beginning to appear on some of the less-developed worlds. And three of the monthly ships from Earth have failed to appear. Panic is near.

Fifteen days ago it was announced that there appeared to be evidence of a Hyperspace Booster somewhere in the Local Group. You have decided to take out a loan for a ship and crew to go look for it.

Unfortunately, operation of a starship costs money. Even while you are searching, you have to earn a living. As in real life, you have a number of options. Most likely you will want to start as a trader, since that requires the least capital and expertise. And, you will have a large market available. The Local Group consists of 21 star systems containing nearly fifty planets, of which more than twenty are habitable. If you have money to burn (and you won't, at first), you can get into mining. Of course, every free trader will always have room for a few passengers. But watch out for pirates. If things get desperate, you can always become a pirate yourself.

I have found *Universe* to be an absorbing game. I expect to be at this for at least another six months, and to be perfectly honest, it's easy to lose sight of the original objective (finding the Booster) and become totally involved in interstellar trade (or piracy).

OMNITREND also appears to be dedicated to user support. Purchase of *Universe* entitles the user to two free hours a month on a special *Universe* bulletin board which allows them to pass on tips and news, as well as to make suggestions to OMNITREND about the game. And here is where OMNITREND really outdoes most other companies. Since I mailed in my warranty card in December, 1983, I have received no less than three unsolicited replacement disks, two of which were updates based on suggestions found on the bulletin board.

There is still one problem yet to be corrected with the program. As of this writing, it was still impossible to create player ship disks with either the Percom or the Trak disk drives. OMNITREND says that they are working on a fix for this, and everyone will receive a replacement disk when the fix is finished. However, at this point the solu-

tion is to create ship disks on another drive such as the Atari 810 or the Indus GT. The game itself plays fine on any drive that I have tested. An additional note — *Universe* seems to run with no problems on the operating system found on the Atari 600XL AND 800XL computers.

In conclusion, this is a "must have" game for those of you who are interested in complex simulations and role playing. The graphics are excellent, the game play is realistic, and the basic premise makes sense. And, what else can you say abut a game in which you can have up to 16 years t pay off the loan on your starship and then buy another one.

Review by Hosea Battles Jr.

Valtus smiled in satisfaction. This had been a profitable venture after all. His spaceship, Altus V, proudly painted with the pirate insignia was a worthy investment indeed. He watched as the last of the prisoners and goods were brought over as the empty shell of a once proud spaceship floated away. Leaving orbit, he set course for the Prisa Starsystem. If he found no clue to the location of the Hyperspace Booster there, he would still make a profit with the goods he had acquired.

Upon entering orbit, his scanners revealed two ships in orbit. One was immediately identified as a trader. Greed overtook better judgement, and he attacked, ignoring the unidentified ship. As he closed in for the kill, his ship shuddered under the impact of several missiles. His shields had failed. As all went black, he thought about how close he had come to being very richhh....

This is exactly what happened to my best ship in OMNITREND'S (*this is exactly what happened to my best ship in Omnitrend's *Universe*. Luckily, I had made a backup copy of the ship, having learned my lesson earlier when forced to start over from scratch and rebuild.

Playing *Universe* is simple. Always making the right decision is hard. Once you have borrowed the money from the bank, the next step is to buy a spaceship design. This design is an empty shell. You will have to purchase hulls and additional equipment to run the ship. The bank provides you with some essential equipment, but leaves off equipment you may find necessary. There are ten hull designs from which to choose, ranging in price from 11,900 credits to 56,025 credits. Consider the price and number of hull spaces a particular design can hold. You will need additional hulls to add other essential equipment as the game progresses. Ask yourself the following questions: How many hull spaces does the ship design have? What other equipment might I add later and how many hull spaces will it take? How much money will be left if I buy a particular good design? How much money will I need to buy goods on the planet Axia to trade? Do I have enough money to buy crew, provisions, armor, programs, and most importantly *Ore IV*? This last will depend on whether you want to be a trader, a miner, or a pirate.

SHIP TYPES

This is the most difficult part of playing the game—deciding whether to be a trader, miner, or pirate. I have tried all three, and eventually called Omnitrend for help. If you decide to be a miner, you'll find the initial cost to be large. Mining equipment is very expensive. After getting the equipment, you'll warp to the planet you choose to mine, go to the mining systems menu, and begin. You may now find you don't have enough Ore IV to operate the equipment.

If you decide to become a pirate, you might have better luck. If you're able to buy sufficient weapons; attacking and boarding a ship are the next problems. The only way to get products off a ship is to board it. Before boarding can take place, a ship's engines must be destroyed or the crew of the ship must drop below ten. The next step is to send crew over with armor in a docking module to board and defeat the other crew. If you're not outnumbered, you can take the ship. The graphic display of this is excellent, you see the battle section by section as your crew progresses. If you take a trader, your crew will take many products which will make you money.

According to Omnitrend, the best ship type is a trader. You should buy at least 15 crewmen, so that you can launch shuttles to planetary surfaces. The most important thing to remember is that each planet has its own *sophistication level*. To trade and make money, you must take goods from a high sophistication planet to a lower sophistication planet (but not more than nine levels lower). Any lower than nine levels and they won't buy your products because they won't know how to use them. Additional money is made from transporting passengers. Eventually you'll make enough money to buy more equipment and Ore IV and venture further out in the galaxy in search of the Hyperspace Booster.

TIPS

Here are some simple rules to follow in the game:

1. Buy a ship with enough hull spaces so that you can add additional equipment later.
2. Become a trader.
3. In the beginning buy no weapons. If attacked, you can run away with no damage.
4. Buy only the minimum amount of equipment, crew, programs, and armor needed to run the ship.
5. Buy plenty of Ore IV, but leave enough money to buy trade goods on planet Axia.
6. Back up your player disk OFTEN!! Once you die, the computer reformats the disk, destroying your player characters. You then have to start over from scratch.
7. Explore the galaxy. Look for clues that will lead you to the hyperspace booster.
8. Travel to planet Zeath in the Prisa system with trade goods and passengers from Axia. Do this about five times. You should then have enough money to buy additional equipment and Ore IV to search the galaxy.
9. The most important point: read the directions and study the appendixes. You won't get very far if you don't

CONCLUSION

Omnitrend has said Universe II will be coming soon. It will add options not available in Universe. We could possibly see a module to upgrade your ship to a new design, not available in Universe. *Universe* is an excellent interactive space adventure with 3D graphics that will give you months of enjoyment and headaches. I can't wait for Universe II and, with luck, maybe I'll have solved *Universe* by then.

HOBBY & INDUSTRY NEWS

First Star Software licenses BOULDER DASH rights to Micro Lab for **$1.3 MILLION** in the industry's largest third party licensing agreement. Micro Lab will produce and distribute the game in versions for the C-64, Adam, Apple, and another as yet unspecified system.

Gamestar, Inc. announced the release of two new games using their "Player Perspective Graphics". Currently available for the C-64 and the Atari home computers, the two new releases, **ON COURT TENNIS** and **ON FIELD FOOTBALL** will soon be available for the Apple.

The hero of Muse Software's Castle Wolfenstein takes on a new wartime mission in Muse's follow-up release, **Beyond Castle Wolfenstein**. In the original game, the player assumes the role of a GI who has one gun and ten bullets as he begins to make his way through an ancient castle to escape Nazi interrogation and torture. In the sequel, the same soldier is sent behind enemy lines to infiltrate Hitler's Berlin Bunker for an attempt on the Fuehrer's life.

Activision is releasing their **THE DREADNAUGHT FACTOR** for the Atari home computer. Suggested retail price is $34.95.

Datasoft, Inc. announced that the Boston-based **Gillette Company** has aquired a 40% equity interest in their corporation, with options for the remaining 60% over the next four years. According to Patrick Detchulm, founder and chief executive officer of Datasoft, the new affiliation with Gillette will enable Datasoft to continue its strong growth trend by introducing new products with widespread consumer appeal.

SEASTALKER, the first in a series of text adventurers for ages nine and above, has been released by Infocom. SEASTALKER is an adventure in the tradition of Jules Verne's "20,000 Leagues Under The Sea,"but instead of reading pages from a book, you become the main character. Available on most popular computers for $39.95.

The first annual "The Day Before" **National Nuclear War Card Game Tournament** is over: as expected, there were no winners. Everyone was destroyed. The destruction of the world took only 23 hours. Just under 1500 megatons of nuclear warheads were dropped on targets, and 687 million people died. About 5 PM on Sunday (MST), Detroit started the final holocaust when they were wiped out by a 100-megaton bomb fired by Las Cruces. The last survivors, down in the salt mines of Detroit, fired off their last missles at San Jose, Las Cruces, and Cotati, wiping out the first two. Then San Jose and Las Cruces fired their stockpiles at Toledo, Norman, and Cotati, destroying Cotati. Cotati fired its retaliation at Tempe and Norman, obliterating Norman. Norman reflexively hit Tempe and Toledo, finishing off Tempe. And finally, Tempe sent all remaining missles at Toledo, finishing the carnage.

As the last survivors (for a few minutes, anyway) the group at Toledo won gift certificates, and the coveted "Supergerm" travelling trophy which will be awarded each year to the final survivor. The cities which participated (in the order that they died) were: Atlanta, GA; Colorado Springs, CO; Long Beach, CA; Royal Oaks, MI; Oklahoma City, OK; Pacific Palisades, CA; Moore, OK; Pembroke Pines, FL; Midwest City, OK; Detroit, MI; San Jose, CA; Las Cruces, NM; Cotati, CA; Norman, OK; Tempe, AZ; and Toledo, OH. There were 65 people involved. The game was played by exchanging the moves by *Electronic Mail* through three different computer networks: Compuserve, The Source, and MCI Mail. For information on next year's tournament, contact Rick Loomis at Flying Buffalo, Inc., (602) 966-4727.

Penguin Software has announced the release of Transylvania for the **Macintosh** and also a version for double-resolution Apples, including the new Apple IIc. The double-resolution version will retail for $34.95 and the Macintosh version $39.95. The next two programs Penguin Software will release for the Macintosh are PENSATE and XYPHUS, a new fantasy role-playing game. Each will retail for $39.95.

Avalon Hill Game Company announced the formation of a new education division, **Intelligence Quest Software**. The initial titles handled by the new division will include STOCKS & BONDS, FACTS IN FIVE, DIVEX, and ABC CATERPILLER.

Three companies, Mind Games Inc., H.A.L. Labs, and Software Entertainment Company , have joined forces to form a new venture called **The Software Consortium**. "In forming this new organization, we have taken a step towards offering better quality, service, and product selection to everyone from distributors to end-users," said Greg Sengall, The Software Consortium's president. "By centralizing many of our operations, we'll be able to enjoy the advantages that go with being a large company, while at the same time, preserving the integrity and quality of product that's generally associated with the smaller software houses." The Consortium's initial offering includes STELLAR 7, VINDICATOR, ELECTRONIC PLAYGROUND, THE DESECRATION, SUPER TAXMAN 2, SHEILA, STELLAR TRIUMPH, and THE SWORD OF KADDASH. The

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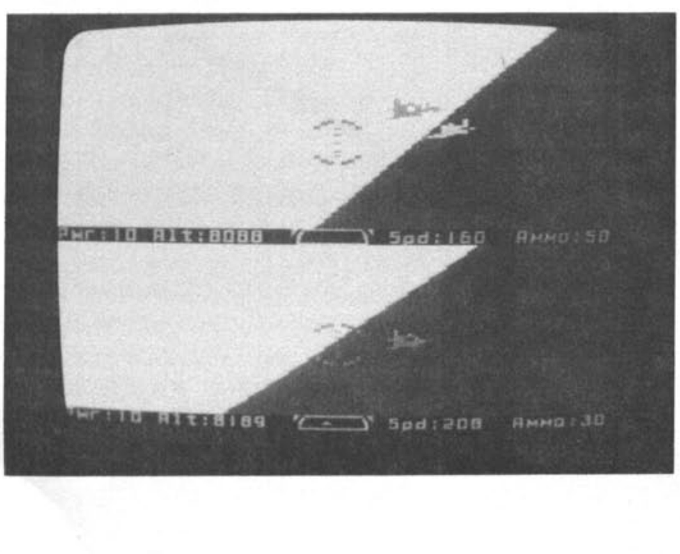


MIG ALLEY ACE

David Patton

BASIC INFORMATION

NAME:	**Mig Alley Ace**
TYPE:	**Arcade**
SYSTEM:	**Atari**
FORMAT:	**Disk**
# PLAYERS:	**1 or 2**
AUTHOR:	**Andy Hollis**
PUBLISHER:	**MicroProse Software Hunt Valley, MD**



The year: 1950. The place: Somewhere over Korea. Your mission: engage and destroy the enemy.

Mig Alley Ace (MAA) puts you in the cockpit of a variety of Korean War planes that you can fly against the computer, against a friend, or cooperatively with a friend against against the computer. Your objective is simple: shoot your opponent out of the sky.

Dogfight arcade games in the late 1970's typically featured two player action with a two-dimensional, side view of the battle. As far as realism went, the planes might as well have been gangster cars or even abstract icons. MAA goes well beyond this type of game — presenting a through-the-canopy view.

Game options include selecting the mode of play (solo, head-to-head, or cooperative) and selecting up to three additional wingmen per team. You can also select any of the five scenarios and one of four levels of difficulty. Press START and you're airborne.

The screen is horizontally split in half so that each pilot has a view from his own cockpit. As a "nice touch" the sky changes in brightness as you fly either away from or toward the sun. Below the sky is a solid green field representing the ground. And, at the bottom of the screen, the instrument panel gives information about planes which are behind you, your speed, altitude, ammo, and throttle power. The only things of any consequence that are missing from the instrumentation are an attitude indicator and fuel gauge. The attitude indicator would have been nice as the unbroken green landscape below lacks landmarks to provide visual orientation.

One feature that distinguishes this game is that it is designed for two joysticks per player. If only one joystick per player is available, the players use the joysticks and keyboard. Pushing your main joystick causes you to either dive, climb, or bank (depending on the direction you push), and the trigger fires your gun-cannon. Pushing your secondary joystick (or designated keys on the keyboard), controls the throttle; with the second trigger being your "eject" button.

A full range of maneuvers is allowed: Immelmanns, loops, Hi-Yo-Yo's, and High-G turns. Basic turning, climbing, and diving are easy, but accomplishing the more difficult maneuvers takes practice (as it should).

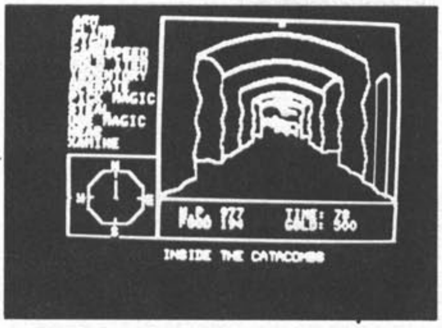
The "feel" of your plane is generally good, with the dives and climbs directly affecting your speed. A sharp dive increases your speed, becoming harder and harder to pull out of. During climbs, you gradually loose speed unless you increase throttle to compensate. A slight bank causes a slow turn, a sharp bank causes a fast turn. Banking too much can even cause you to fly upside down. And, if you combine a dive and a bank, you run the very real risk of going into a tail spin and crashing.

Gun fire is also well handled. You have a limited number of bullets and an effective range of about 2000 yards. A push of the trigger button sends tracers streaming in front of you. If you change the attitude of the plane, the bullets continue to go in the direction they were originally fired.

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QUESTRON™

A Review by James A. McPherson



BASIC INFORMATION

NAME:	**Questron**
TYPE:	**Fantasy Role-Playing**
SYSTEM:	**Apple II**
# PLAYERS:	**One**
PRICE:	**$49.95**
AUTHOR:	**Charles W. Dougherty**
PUBLISHER:	**Strategic Simulations Mountain View, CA**

If you are in need of a new and challenging role-playing game similar in play to the Ultima scenarios, then look no further. . . Questron is here.

Questron's game structure and style is under license from Richard Garriott, so be prepared for a game that utilizes game basics that are in demand by the adventure consumer. But don't expect a copy. The land of Questron looks strikingly different. As does its' villages, castles, and especially the dungeons. But first lets discuss your quest.

You begin this quest as a lowly serf who lives on the outskirts of Geraldtown. You have heard of other villages, outposts, great cathedrals and dungeons with horrible monsters, but so far have not ventured very far from Geraldtown. There have also been rumors of a mighty castle with an army of guards, a fortune in treasure, and MESRON the Great Wizard.

These rumors also say that MANTOR, the Evil One, has escaped this castle, fled to another world and returned with a book of powerful magic. He has settled in the land of evil, from which he uses the spells to rule evil armies that are destroying the world of Questron.

It is said that a serf will rise from humble beginnings to destroy Mantor in battle .... (Quick Watson, the game is afoot!)

So you sell your oxen for 57 gold pieces and, since you only have rawhide armor and three months worth of provisions, you first stop in Geraldtown to buy a weapon—and the quest begins.

When you first boot up Questron, a portion of the land appears with Geraldtown near the center. A joystick is used to move about the surface. To the left, on the screen, is a list of all of the commands which can be accessed. From this list you can, for instance, choose either "wear" or "arm" to pick which armor or weapon you want to use. Just because you buy a weapon or armor does not mean it automatically is usable. Directly below this list is another shorter list that tells you how many hit points, gold, food, and time you have left. These items will change as you move or fight, so keep close watch to make sure you always have enough hit points and food. The bottom portion of the screen shows your current action (i.e. go north, etc).

One of the commands also allows you to bring up a screen that lists your attribute and inventory status. When you begin the game your attributes are all set at fifteen. Your inventory list will include armor, weapon, and magic spells (if any).

As you travel in the land of Questron you will come across towns, cities, cathedrals, and a castle. Later you will enter the dungeons. During these travels you can talk to merchants, farmers, and other folk (talking with them can sometimes help you in your quest). When you encounter someone or something in your travels it is often wise to "speak." If you choose to fight initially you could, at times, lose some valuable information or item.

One of the first problems this reviewer ran into was how to get hit points. I received gold whenever I was a victor from a fight but was at a loss on the hit points. I finally entered one of the cathedrals and approached the priest behind the altar. He asked for money and I obliged, but nothing seemed to happen. So I explored the area. I was told not to enter one room if I was a sinner, I entered anyway. Inside I found holy water, which I picked up. I found that when I drank the water my hit points went up. But if you don't pay the priest and go into the holy water rom you will become trapped.

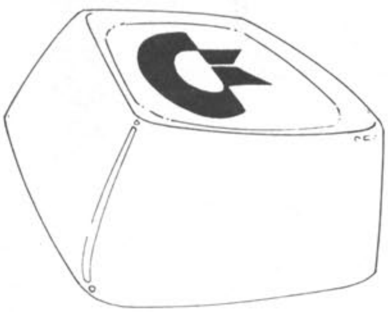
In another part or the cathedral is a priest who, for fifty dollars, will let you play an arcade skeet-shoot game. If you do well your dexterity will increase. You can keep playing the game but each time you have to get a better score than the last or you will lose dexterity points. Other cathedrals have similar benefits.

Spend the first part of the game strengthening your character and increasing your hit point reserves. In your wandering you will eventually come across the castle, but there is no need to immediately explore it (I know—you will anyway). Mesron will call you to the castle when he feels the time is right. A weak character may not last long in the castle. When you fight an opponent, the outcome depends on your attributes (strength, stamina, agility), the weapon in your hand, your armor, and the strengths and weaknesses of the creature you are fighting. Ongoing battle status is described at the bottom of the screen. There are over 100 different types of creatures inhabiting Questron (each is described in detail in the rulebook). Each type looks different, reacts differently, and is best attacked with certain weapons.

There are other forms of transportation besides "Shank's Mare" (your basic transportation). You just have to have enough money to afford them. There are swamps to cross and mountains to climb and the right form of transportation will get you through each. But, be advised of the deadly fog. If you enter it you can never be sure of the direction you will go or the creatures you will meet. In your travels you may also come across a sailing ship, but the only way to get to it will be to traverse a large fogged-in area. The ship is a prize worth fighting for, but make sure that before you enter the fog you have plenty of food, hit points, and patience.

You are probably wondering when I'm going to get to the dungeons. I've been saving them for last. There are three dungeons that have to be conquered. They must be conquered in a certain order. At first, there will be only one dungeon you can enter due to

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THE COMMODORE KEY

Roy Wagner

All of you that have Commodore 64s (C64) should now be quite happy with your choice. The computer and its peripherals are low priced and the company behind the computer is economically sound. And, the recent management changes should be good for all of us. All other magazines have been mentioning the proposed new variations on the C64 called the 264 and 464. These models have been indefinitely removed from consideration for production. May they rest in peace, and upgrade models compatible with the C64 be designed.

The best thing about owning a C64 is all the new software that is becoming available for it. The quality of currently available software is excellent and the variety good. Nearly all of the new software from major software companies is now being offered in three flavors: Commodore, Atari, and Apple. The new programs coming out for the C64 show that programmers are now beginning to use the features of the C64 that make it such a powerful and versatile computer. This time I will discuss three different groups of games that represent some exceptional products.

A few words about pricing. Generally you get what you pay for. Most products are priced fairly, but unfortunately there are some exceptions. The major software companies usually have a single fixed price, such as $34.95, on the majority of their software. Too often the quality varies widely. So, before you buy anything, read the reviews of the software for your computer. There can be significant differences between the SAME game on different computers. If you can, try to see a demo of the product. Be suspicious of advertisements, especially if they don't show actual pictures of what it looks like on the screen.

I have a few comments about the pricing of some companies which produce some very good programs for the C64. When Atari started losing money trying to sell their machine, someone came up with an excellent idea. If you can't get them to buy your computer, get them to buy your software. With that simple idea, Atarisoft, (a division of Atari Corporation) is showing a good profit. Commodore will soon be producing software for other computers also. The Atarisoft products are good. I think they did an excellent job of converting *Dig Dug* and *Donkey Kong* from the arcade to the C64. But I think their retail price of $44.95 is too much! A price of $35 would be more reasonable. I was very pleased that their games are cartridges rather than disk, making them available to anyone with a C64. You can expect to pay about $5 more for any cartridge game.

Programmers are now beginning to use the features of the C-64 that make it such a powerful and versatile computer.

Another company that converted from the arcades to the home computer is Parker Brothers. Their games *Frogger*, *Q-Bert*, and *Popeye* are also on cartridge and even higher priced at $49.95. These companies probably feel justified in charging higher than typical prices because these games are the "original" arcade versions. They are probably committed to paying much higher royalty rights to the original designers because these games are proven successes.

Spinnaker produces some very good software—fun and educational—with excellent graphics and sound. However, I highly recommend you look and listen before you buy. Their pricing structure offers a wide and reasonably fair range, but some of their games are very limited in playability for price. I have been disappointed with *Cosmic Life*, *Fraction Fever*, and *Jukebox*. The others that I have seen are well done and offer good variety. They cover their intended subject well. Make sure that subject, and underlying educational value of the game, is what you want. I recommend *Story Machine* (for 5-8 year olds), *In Search of the Most Amazing Thing* and *Trains*. The latter is an excellent simulation. It is like playing with a model train and learning about supply and demand at the same time.

THREE OF A KIND: CHESS IS THE FIRST

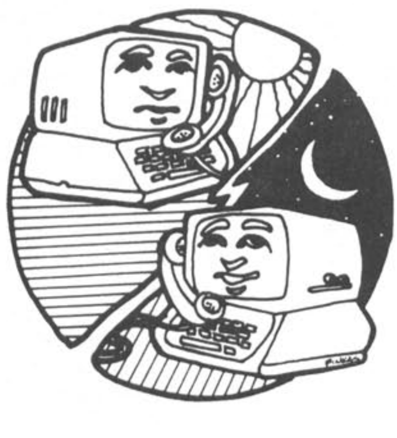
Three outstanding computer chess programs are now available for the C64. *Chess 7.0* (C7.0) from Odesta ($69.95), *How About a Nice Game of CHESS!* from Odesta ($29.95) and *Sargon II* from Hayden ($29.95). Sargon II is very disappointing. The conversion was very awkwardly done, and using it requires constant reference back to the skimpy manual. Moves must be made using chess notation (A2-A4, etc). The graphics and colors are well done, but the user options are minimal and hitting the wrong key will often produce unexpected results. It does however, play a good game of chess.

C7.0 (CGW 3.3) and *Chess!* (a subset of *C7.0* containing nearly all features) are certainly the best chess programs available for the C64. The manuals are very detailed (64 and 96 pages respectively), explaining all aspects of the program's capabilities in great detail, along with discussions about chess in general. Both programs are menu driven with little need to refer back to the manual. Moves are made using the cursor and only acceptable moves to legal positions are permitted.

Options are easily selected from the menu next to the game board. These options include changing sides, pieces, or positions. The playing level of the computer can be adjusted from taking one second/move to letting it "think" until you tell it to move (hours, even days). You can take a move back, replay it, rerun the game from the start, break from rerun and resume where you left off, or restart (throwing the chess board in the air and starting again). You can also ask for advice or switch sides if the game gets too tough. These features are available with both versions.

The extras you get with *C7.0* are deeper levels of play, ability to play blind chess (where you don't see the pieces), ability to

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TELE-GAMING

Patricia Fitzgibbons

With a sense of anticipation, I logged onto my favorite local bulletin board system. I knew that my Dungeon Master had probably posted a new move, and that our party of adventurers could expect trouble. We found it.

> As you approach, you see that this is no natural creature, but the creation of some wizard. It seems unwilling or unable to stray far from the outcropping of rock (which, at this distance, you can tell are the ruins of some man-made structure). The ground is littered with the skeletal remains of the creature's last meal. Aragorn tries to communicate with the monster. Oultar seems confused, dazed. Suddenly, the skeletons come to life! Some are wearing armor; most are carrying weapons. One wields a bright, shining sword. In shock, Lastel mutters something. The skeletons do not seem bound to this place as is the hairy creature. They are coming at you.

There was nothing we could do but fight. While my comrades readied their weapons or prepared spells, I nocked an arrow and attempted to get a clear shot at the gruesome undead. Somehow, most of us survived this encounter. But what about the next time?

Our game, which the Dungeon Master ("DM") calls "a hybrid of *D&D, Runequest, Champions,* and others," is run via a gaming message board on the *Lyceum* BBS in Long Beach, California. The game was organized by Michael Daniels, a twenty-eight year old city employee who has been involved in fantasy role-playing for the past six years. This is his first "remote" game.

According to Michael, the BBS game helps him to polish his face-to-face game: "I'm working on my own game system, and this lets me get all the bugs out of it. I run into a snag in almost every move, but in a remote game that's no problem because I have plenty of time to fix it. These problems would kill a live game. A DM can put a lot more imagination into a remote game because he or she has more time. I don't have to just hit the party with a random encounter to buy time for myself."

Players in BBS games usually leave new turns twice a week. The DM then assesses the moves and posts a response. Time delays in BBS games can help the DM and the players to think through their moves, communicate with each other by private electronic mail, and even look up monster descriptions in a gaming guide. Further, if a player misses a turn, the game is still there, waiting, when he or she returns. For Michael Daniels, this means that: "The game is there whenever you want it, instead of being something you have to budget time for. Since I find it just about impossible to get a group together for a live game (most of the people I know are too busy), the BBS game is perfect for me."

Michael's game began in mid-January when he left a message soliciting players on the Lyceum's bulletin board. He posted several informational files about his game in a special discussion area on the Lyceum, and quickly organized a party. Michael's files are typical of those found on many gaming BBSs. First, he outlined the general rules to be used in the game, and explained what a prospective player needed to do to join. Then, he described his "world" of swords and sorcery set in the ancient Currium Province of the Kingdom of Alarond. Thus far, his stalwart group of adventurers has travelled from the dissolute City of Haven into the mysterious Iron Mountains, in search of a magical axe.

The players have gotten to know each other through private mail and through occasional in-person gatherings. Even though they have had opportunities to continue the game face-to-face, they prefer sticking to the bulletin board. Again, this is because the individuals each have different work schedules and interests, and enjoy the flexibility of a remote game.

Another experienced DM who runs a message board fantasy role-playing game is Tom Wooley from Dallas, Texas. One of his favorite gaming locales is the *Asgard* BBS in Ft. Worth. There are seven games currently held on Asgard; Tom started his group last December. On a busy board like Asgard, players who cannot access the system except during prime usage hours (evenings and weekends) may miss moves and have to drop out. One of Tom's players is from Shreveport, Louisiana, and, for a while, he was the leader of the party. Thus, really dedicated folks, even those who have to call long distance, can still participate fully in a BBS game.

Tom listed several disadvantages involved in playing via a BBS: "The best boards for RPG'ing are always the busiest, so you can't access as freely as you would like. Also, players are not able to pick up non-verbal signals from their comrades or, more importantly, from the DM. And, there's always the problem of being dependent on hardware: if the computer goes whacko or the phone screws up, it's good-bye game!"

The benefits, of course, are many of the same mentioned by Michael Daniels. Tom likes the time he has to plan his next move: "You can read the message, think it over, even interact with others. Then you can make a final decision as to what you want to do rather than making a snap judgment and regretting it moments later when someone else says, 'Why didn't you .... ?'"

From a player's perspective, BBS games offer an opportunity to meet new friends and drop in or out of games. Although a good DM feels a strong sense of responsibility to all of his or her party members, players can be very discriminating about which games they want to join or quit.

Mary Kelly, a twenty-seven year old computer programmer from Dallas, has played in a number of BBS games. Her current favorite runs on the Teledunjon III system. She addressed the issues of game failures: "I have seen board games die due to loss of DM interest as well as lack of player participation. I don't think this happens any more often than it does in 'real life,' though. Board stability can be a problem, too. One BBS I know has suffered several crashes recently." Yet, Mary still prefers remote games. She explained further: "I can work the game into my own schedule. I have a chance to meet people whom I might not otherwise meet. I don't have to lug my gaming books and equipment around. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, players' personalities don't get in the way!"

Every experienced fantasy role-player has, at one time or another, run into "personality clashes" among players and DMs. Sometimes combat situations can seem all too real or players become angry if they feel that the DM has made an unfair decision. The distance involved in remote games helps diminish this problem. Generally, if a party member is unhappy about how a game is going, he or she simply drops out of sight and the DM quickly finds a replacement. Because of the number of games available, players can shop around for a game that suits their interests. DMs can be selective about whom they allow to join their games, and can work out a relationship with the BBS' sysop so that the DM has a free hand on the gaming board.

Although BBS games frequently come and go (depending on system stability and callers' interests) there are always several message board games running on CompuServe's Gamers' Special Interest Group ("GameSIG"). One of these ongoing adventurers, "Quest for Andelaine," is the thoroughly researched and finely-tuned creation of N.T. Nelson, a thirty-four year

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TO MARKET, TO MARKET, TO BUY A FAT PIG

by Johnny Wilson

NAME:	**Tycoon and Baron**
TYPE:	**Strategy-Financial**
SYSTEM:	**Many**
FORMAT:	**Disk**
# Players:	**1**
AUTHOR:	**Jim Zuber**
PRICE:	**Varies with system**
PUBLISHER:	**Blue Chip Software Woodland Hills, CA**

The Financial News trumpeted a sudden decrease in the number of corn fed hogs in the U.S. and my greedy fingers quickly dialed in the command to contact my broker. The projected sudden drop in supply couldn't help but skyrocket pork bellies' prices higher than ever. I purchased all the pork contracts my cash flow would allow and held my breath until the next week. I breathed a sigh of relief as I viewed the revised prices. I'd guessed correctly and would shortly make a killing in the market.

Tycoon is a superior cousin to the *Millionaire* stock market simulation from Blue Chip Software (reviewed in CGW 3.2). The program is both similar and improved. It is similar in that the basic mechanics of the game are the same, simply adapted for the commodities market rather than the stock market. The player sees a graph for general market conditions, a random graph for commodities that may or may not be owned by the player, a synopsis of the Financial News, graphs for the player's own holdings, a table of prices and, finally, the command menu. It is improved, because the program is more user-friendly. In Tycoon, the player need only hit the first letter of any activity on the command menu in order to access it, as opposed t typing in the whole word in Millionaire. There is also much improved and simplified presentation of research data. There are five graphs available to chart the progress of each commodity: an *oscillator graph* to show the net change in total contract prices, an *average graph* to show a three week averaging trend, a *standard scatter plot graph* (as in Millionaire), a *point and figure graph* to demonstrate upward and downward price trends, and a *historical graph* to show annual cycles.

Players will probably enjoy Tycoon more than the other two games, as it moves faster (due to being able to use accumulating cash immediately without having to liquidate investments) and as it has more options (one can actually "sell short" when the market is likely to go down—"selling short" is using your credit to promise to sell stock or commodity options today that you won't actually buy until a later day, *after* the price has gone down, hence earning the difference in prices.) The game seems realistic in that it takes a combination of fundamentalist and technical approaches to be successful. I list the fundamentalist approach first, because designer Jim Zuber has so chained the price probabilities of the program to the "news" that one cannot possibly succeed without taking the fundamental law of supply and demand into account (Dan Bunten discussed "continuous" probabilities of this type in CGW 2.6, p. 16). The first rule of thumb in Tycoon is to pay attention to the news, decide how the news will affect the supply or demand for a particular commodity and then, buy or sell ot that basis. Another approach to the market is the technical approach. This approach studies the historical cycles of the market, notes the seasons when the commodity's price is perennially high and buys and sells on that basis.

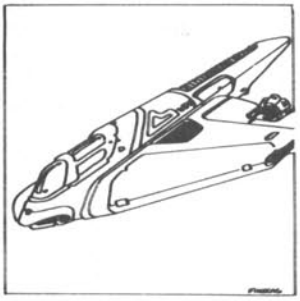
A combination of these two approaches will prove to be most effective. The fundamental approach should be used to discover a potentially good investment and the technical approach to help determine the contract month to invest toward. This combination keeps a portfolio in balance and gives a specific date to liquidate without worrying about whether an investment has reached its summit or not. (Note: This system was good enough to net my first million early in my third game of Tycoon, so I know it works.) The second rule is to learn how to cut your losses. Because so much depends on cash flow and appreciation, it doesn't pay to try to ride out a bad trend.

Baron, on the other hand, is not a fast moving game. Even though the stated goal of the simulation was to squeeze 60 months of real estate into a one hour session, the game mechanics drag. Once again, the basic design is similar. The player sees a general graph, a random graph, the news, graphs on his holdings, the prices and the command menu. Baron, like Tycoon, is also more user-friendly than Millionaire in its command functions.

The listings in Baron are much more interesting, however, than the price listings in Tycoon or Millionaire. Baron's listings offer a general description of the three possible types of properties (residential, business and undeveloped land). If the player is interested in a specific property, it is possible to get a detailed description of the property and the financial information concerning it. Baron also has random events which can cost the property owner a month's profit. These are done very "tongue-in-cheek" and are a marvelous asset to the game. Some examples are: a tenant that goes mad, a pool light that nearly electrocutes an apartment's tenants, and a tenant's cat who trips over a damaged area and may sue.

Baron seems to be a fine tutorial on learning about real estate speculation, but lacks an important mechanism as a game. A game demands some chance for success, no matter what the circumstances. Baron gives this chance in "hot" and "mixed" markets, but there is no offsetting mechanism for the investor in a "down" market. In Tycoon, there is the chance to sell short, once one has attained a certain level. In Millionaire, there is the opportunity to purchase *put* options at a *certain* level. In Baron, it looks as though the option to invest in alternate investments

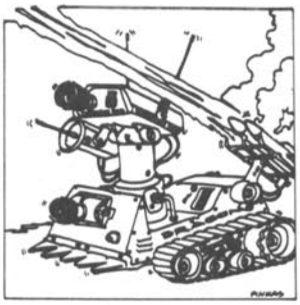
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Atari Playfield

David Stone

In this issue we welcome a new Atari columnist, Dave Stone. Our thanks to Allen Doom who wrote the Atari column for over a year.

As all Atari home computer owners know (or at least feel deep in their hearts), Atari is the best overall game machine on the market for the serious gamer: one hundred twenty eight colors, multiple graphic modes, player/missile (or "sprite") graphics, four voice sound, smooth scroll, redefinable characters, ports for controllers (such as joysticks, paddles, trackballs, and light pens) and so many peripherals available that if we bought only half of what we wanted, it would make our initial investment seem trivial. I'm not saying that the Atari is faultless—just that the hardware is there for the gifted software designer/programmer to make him/herself rich and famous. Or, for the mediocre, unimaginative programmer to make a modest living. And there is the rub.

The wide range in the quality of software available is incredible. On the one hand, the more the better; on the other hand, people are buying a lot of mediocre programs in search of the good ones. Who hasn't been burned by a bad purchase? Look in the back of your disk or cartridge holder. See any dust-covered "old friends" there whose play value isn't worth the time it takes to load them?

The question becomes, how can you improve your chances of getting your money's worth in software? My advice is to use good indicators. For example, consider the source when you hear about the play value of any game. Avoid making purchases based solely on the input of "interested" parties.

Following are what I consider to be either weak or, at best, irrelevant indicators. First, the name of the publisher — buying based on the theory that this new game must be a good one because these are the folks who brought you your second-most favorite game ever, doesn't wash. That's like saying you're ready to buy the next book published by Doubleday because you liked the last one they published.

How can you improve your chances of getting your money's worth in software?

Another irrelevant indicator is the ad. OF COURSE the ad says the game has stunning graphics, amazing music, and hours of fun in store for you. What did you expect it to say? ".... the game is a clone with many of the features of the original missing." Ads are a good way of finding out what's new, not for what's a good buy. I love the art and imagination that goes into some of the ads. Now that many of the software publishers are being handled by major Madison Avenue ad firms, look for the ads to be more persuasive than ever. However, if you believe everything you read, please write to me in care of CGW, I've got some real estate for sale in Southern Florida that you'll just love.

Trying the game out in a store is a good indicator, right? Wrong. It may be okay for some games, but others, like *M.U.L.E.*, *Zork* and *Legionnaire* (just to name a few) are too subtle and too complex to sell themselves well in a five minute demo.

Yet another weak indicator: "I saw this game in the arcade or on an Apple (or C-64 or whatever)". Too many weak translations and implementations have led to some rather dissatisfied Atari game players. Most often the cause of this is that the programmer didn't take advantage of the power of the Atari hardware (see comments about Apple to Atari translations below).

Now for the strong indicators: A good review in a magazine like CGW. Reviewers want to build a readership and that means building trust. At best, a reviewer never lies, at worst, he pulls a punch or two (usually rationalizing that the game may not be his cup of tea). Read between the lines. Don't rule a game out just because it got a bad review, but consider why the reviewer was "down" on the game. Also, study the Game Ratings in CGW's Reader's Input Device. Buying only games that score 7.00 or higher hedges your bet considerably—but squelches the thrill of being the first one on your block to have the game. However, you may not always agree with the consensus (for example, in the last R.I.D. I was shocked and dismayed to see one of my favorites—Mr. Robot—at the bottom of the heap.)

Another good indicator: the name of the programmer or designer. The guys who write software tend to be like mountain climbers. They don't like rescaling the same peaks. They always seem to be setting new, tougher challenges for themselves. This usually translates into more sophisticated, more playable games. If you like the last game by an author, chances are his new one will be a topper.

Finally, as car ads used to say, "ask the man who owns one." This is probably the most reliable way of judging if a game's for you—short of borrowing it from a friend for the weekend.

Selecting software that satisfies is basically the buyer's problem: *caveat emptor*. Publishing software that satisfies is the programmer's and publisher's responsibility. I'm grateful that so many software companies support the Atari. But let's face facts, they don't do it to fulfill altruistic urges. They do it because they want to make a lot of money (just like the rest of us).

However, if they plan to make money AND stay around in the long term, they hopefully realize that they must deliver a product that satisfies Atari owners. Which brings me to the point: my dissatisfaction with games that have been translated from the Apple to the Atari with little consideration for the differences in the two systems.

Three areas in particular rankle me: *input*, *sound*, and *color*. Forcing the player to type in single letter commands, or even complex commands, is really inexcusable in most action, or multi-player games. Atari owners all have the same type of joystick (unlike Apple-owners). Considering games such as *M.U.L.E.* (from Electronic Arts) or *Ali Baba* (from Quality Software), you see good examples of how complex input can be implemented for joystick control. Now, someone might say, ".... nothing is wrong with keyboard input. Atari owners are spoiled." Maybe so. But shouldn't the computer be the one doing all the work while the human is having all the fun?

Next, the Atari's built-in sound generation capabilities are far superior to the Apple's. Atari owners expect more than a *"crackle-pop-dinkety-dink-dink"* when a bomb explodes or a goal is achieved. We expect brilliant sound effects and musical motif's that identify characters or events (like the notes that announce the Shadow is coming in "Shamus" by Synapse). We expect catchy theme music (like the tune that plays dur-

Continued on page 35

BROADSIDES REPLAY

by Jay Selover





Welcome, sports fans, to another fascinating "what if" replay of history. Today's question is, "What if the Bonhomme Richard had been commanded by a landlubber like me instead of by John Paul Jones?" Now, with the help of SSI's **Broadsides**, we can find out.

Broadsides is a very good tactical simulation of ship-to-ship combat in the "Age of Fighting Sail". Each player controls one ship, and uses the keyboard or a paddle controller to give commands to the crew of his ship. The graphic display gives information about each ship (current speed, damage, crew, etc.) on the right third of the screen, and the rest of the screen shows an overhead view of the two ships as they move. The game action is almost arcade quality, as the two ships are constantly moving and you can input an order at any time.

While it plays like an arcade game, *Broadside* is designed around an accurate simulation. When an order is given, there is a delay (which can be varied to reflect crew quality) before the order is actually executed on the screen. There are three types of shot you can use for your cannon load, and you can target either the enemy's hull or sails. There is even an entire subroutine for boarding actions and hand-to-hand fighting while the ships are grappled. All in all, it really is a very good simulation.

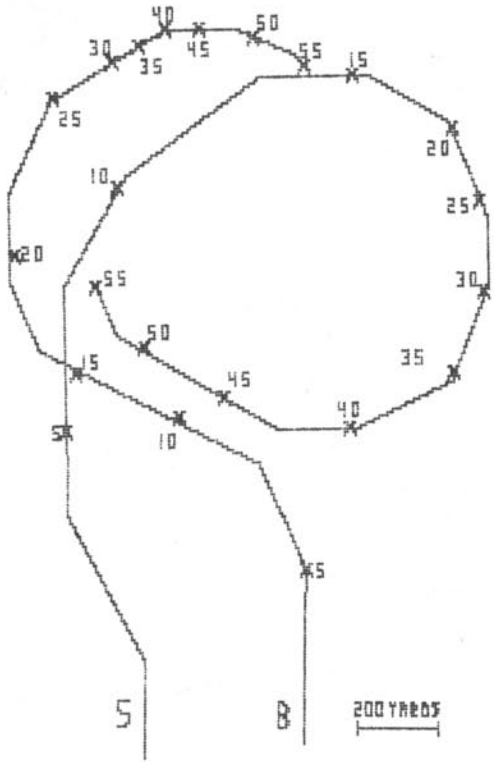
And so, to the battle. We used the shipyard to create replicas of the *Bonhomme Richard* and the *Serapis*. Both were good, solid frigates (the Bonhomme Richard was actually a converted merchant ship). On paper, the Serapis looks a little better; it has 20 more "hull points" and a normal top speed which is 0.5 knots faster. The American ship does have one advantage; a crew of 420 as compared to 270 on the Serapis. The other big advantage that the Americans had historically was the ability of John Paul Jones, and we have wiped that out by putting me on the ship instead. Historically, this is the battle where the Bonhomme Richard was challenged to surrender early in the battle and John Paul replied with "I have not yet begun to fight!" The time is 6:00 AM, August 14, 1779.

0600: We emerge from a fogbank and suddenly, there she is! The Serapis is 400 yards off our port beam. Her first broadside misses even as I'm barking orders to the crew. We'll use chain shot on her sails first to cut her speed advantage. I order a turn to port and back the sails. This should let the Serapis scoot by us as we cut across her stern. We exchange broadsides and I get 8 points but the Serapis scores 16.

0605: The Serapis has jogged away so we get one free shot (8 points), but she's sped up so that she will be long gone by the time we cross her path. I desperately call for more speed and order solid shot loaded in the guns; she's getting too far away to use chain shot.

0615: She's fired 5 times in the last 10 minutes but scored only 2 hits (8 points). I've finally brought my starboard broadside to bear and hit on 2 of 4 attempts; one for a healthy 14 points. We start a long turn to starboard, circling the enemy.

0630: After trading several ineffective broadsides, the Serapis is beginning to find the range. She's slowed as she turned into the wind, but has kept a broadside toward me. She's firing at my hull, and scored three hits in a row (32 points). I've missed my last 8



First Encounter

shots, either because I didn't have her in the play of my guns or because I misjudged the range.

0655: As we continued our turn into the wind, we lost headway; but the Serapis has disengaged! She's been winning the duel for the last 25 minutes with 6 of 12 shooting (40 points) to my 6 of 14 (31 points). Her sails don't look that bad but I've lost 26 percent of my hull. I'm down on points, 90 to 61.

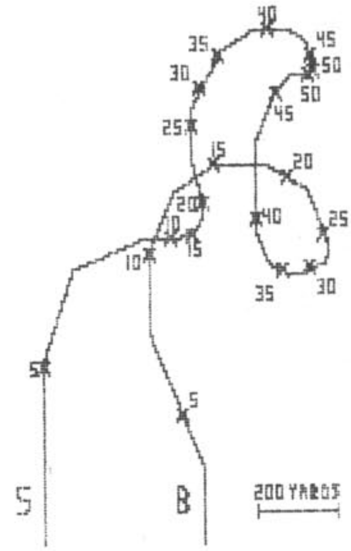
1100: We emerge from another fogbank, and there she is again! She's 350 yards to port. She gets 22 points in the first two minutes, but I'm more prepared this time and retaliate for 21 points of my own. I had already decided how to handle another engagement, and immediately order a turn to port, full sails, and a load of grapeshot in all guns. We'll board her and use our numbers (now 409 to 258) to overpower them.

1110: She's outfoxed me again. She cut to starboard quickly and then backed sails. I can't turn fast enough to hit her and go right by. As we cross her stern, I have a perfect opportunity to rake her deck with grapeshot, but we miss!

1125: We switch to solid shot but only get 4 points on 2 hits as we sweep around to starboard to line up for another run at her. She was really slowed down by her last maneuver and is just now building speed.

1145: We haven't fired for 15 minutes, as we head straight for her; I anticipated her turn better this time. We've taken considerable hull damage in the last 20 minutes (6 hits in 9 shots; 42 points).

1152: We hit her broadside and grapple after taking 3 rakes on our final approach. My 389 men engage 255 on the Serapis. In a furious battle, my men are doing very well but the Serapis is working hard to disengage the grapples.



Second Encounter

1250: After one hour, we stand at 257 to 80 in the crews, but the Serapis has gotten off the last grapple and we drift apart. My nose is into the wind, I have no way to make headway, and I am faced into her full broadside. Four hits and down I go!

Well, I'm no John Paul Jones, but I actually came close. Had the crew of the Serapis dropped to 65 (an additional 15 crew lost in the boarding action), it would have been 75 percent of her crew lost and she would have surrendered to my crippled ship. Oh well, I'll get her next time.



the learning game

Bob Proctor

Since starting *The Learning Game*, I have become a magnet for games for young children. This is a very important area and one which is rapidly fulfilling its potential — this column was created to cover the field but I only have six a year! Furthermore, a study of the ratings on the RID's shows that TLG scores better when the subject is a game for high school age and older. Assuming then, that readers have a preference for adult games, I will limit the number of times we discuss games for the young to once or twice a year. If you disagree with this, please let us know.

These are games that will keep young minds active during the summer months.

That still leaves me with a great pile of games that deserve an evaluation. Therefore, here's the first annual TLG Summer Shopper's Guide of software for gradeschoolers and pre-schoolers. These are games which will keep young minds active during summer vacation, or (just maybe) keep young mouths quiet when you need to get errands done. They are presented roughly in order of intended audience, youngest first.

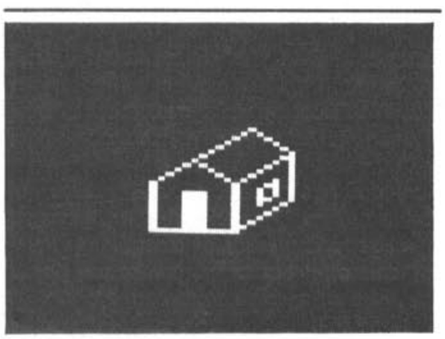
NAME:	**Early Games For Young Children**
TYPE:	**Preschool Skills**
SYSTEM:	**Apple II/IIe, Atari, C-64, IBM, TRS-80, VIC**
FORMAT:	**Diskette**
AGES:	**2 to 6**
# PLAYERS:	**1**
PRICE:	**$29.95**
PUBLISHER:	**Counterpoint Software Minneapolis, MN**

The best selling Apple program for pre-schoolers, it's selling moderately well for other systems too. I attribute this to two reasons: it got to market early and it offers a lot of variety for the money.

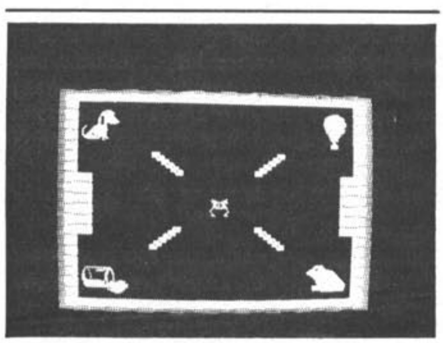
EGFYC has nine different games which cover counting, number and letter recognition, matching, simple, addition, typing and drawing pictures. There is a menu in which pictures of the games appear one after the other; a push of the spacebar will "choose" the game on-screen. The games are good at building skills but the graphics (low-res) and sound are uninspiring, to say the least. Based on the reactions of my test group (admittedly a jaded bunch), the game won't get much replay unless no other choices are available.

NAME:	**Learning With Leeper**
TYPE:	**Preschool Skills**
SYSTEM:	**Apple II+ or IIe**
FORMAT:	**Diskette**
AGES:	**3-6**
# PLAYERS:	**1**
PRICE:	**$34.95**
PUBLISHER:	**Sierra On-Line, Inc. Coarsegold, CA**

Here's a better choice for the very young. It has great high-res animation and sound and enough variety to keep kids enthralled for hours. It requires a joystick; a disadvantage if you don't have one, but joysticks are easier to use for the youngest gamers. LWL also has a simple pictorial menu (see photo) so that children can switch through the four games freely once the program is running. In one, you must pick the pile of bones that matches the number of puppies. In Balloon Pop, you match letters and shapes. If you don't miss any (of about 12), you are rewarded with a brief arcade style balloon-popping game. A third game involves guiding a frog — being chased by a slow snake — through a series of mazes. The last "game" is free-drawing and very nicely done. The joystick moves a paintbrush and a button controls the flow of paint. Four cans of paint in the corners allow you to change colors. This approach is natural and easily learned and the drawings are *very* colorful.



Early Games



Learning with Leeper



Stickybear

NAME:	**Stickybear Bop/Stickybear Basket Bounce**
TYPE:	**Arcade**
SYSTEM:	**Apple II/IIe**
FORMAT:	**Diskette**
AGES:	**3 and up**
# PLAYERS:	**1**
PRICE:	**$39.95 each**
PUBLISHER:	**Xerox Education Publications Middletown, CT**

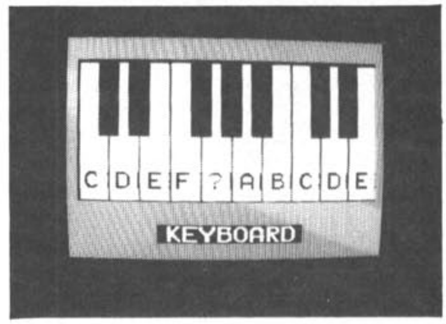
Here are two pure arcade games that are easy enough for three-year-olds and entertaining enough for their parents to play. They have great high-res animation and good sound, full of bears, balls, ducks, rabbits, planets, stars and hats. They both have several levels; in BOP, some are shooting galleries, others involve dodging sandbags dropped by Stickybear from his balloon. In BASKET BOUNCE, Stickybear tries to catch falling objects in his basket. These games establish Stickybear as a fun companion, which is a useful lead-in to the Stickybear games which teach (see below). These are quality products with great graphics; they include posters and stickers which generate enthusiasm in this age group. The only drawback is the cost of buying multiple programs.

NAME:	**Stickybear Opposites/Stickybear Shapes**
TYPE:	**Pre-school Skills**
SYSTEM:	**Apple II/IIe**
FORMAT:	**Diskette**
AGES:	**3 to 6**
# PLAYERS:	**1**
PRICE:	**$39.95**
PUBLISHER:	**Xerox Education Publications Middletown, CT**

In SHAPES, you can play 3 different games: pick the missing shape, match the shapes and names, or find the flashing shape in a picture which has all five shapes: circle, square, triangle, diamond, and rectangle. In all three, a correct answer is rewarded with a short animated sequence. These are so entertaining that most kids will sit through them over and over, which provides good reinforcement.

OPPOSITES is not quite so much a game. Each picture illustrates two opposite ideas: up and down, light and dark, fast and slow. You can flip the picture back and forth from one to the other. As you do, Stickybear runs up and down stairs or turns the lamp on and off.

Like the earlier programs for NUMBERS and ABC's, these two games have very clever graphics and animation and include posters, stickers, and picture books. They are very entertaining (for their age group!) and are easy for young children to use once the program is running.



NAME:	**Early Games Music**
TYPE:	**Musical Notes**
SYSTEM:	**Apple II/IIe, C-64, IBM**
FORMAT:	**Diskette**
AGES:	**4 to 12**
# PLAYERS:	**1**
PRICE:	**$29.95**
PUBLISHER:	**Counterpoint Software Minneapolis, MN**

Early Music Games is another game from Counterpoint that stresses variety. With it, you can play music, record the music you create, and play back your creation. This

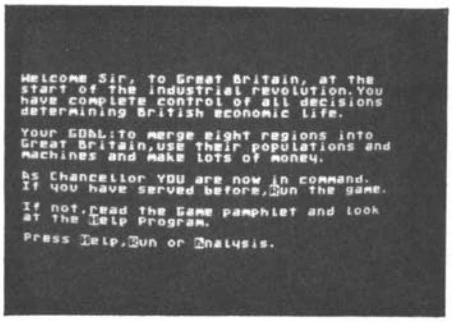
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Chancellor of the Exchequer

by Stewart MacKames

NAME:	**Chancellor of the Exchequer**
TYPE:	**Historical Economic Simulation**
SYSTEM:	**Atari**
FORMAT:	**Disk**
#PLAYERS:	**1**
AUTHOR:	**R.C. Chiofolo**
PRICE:	**$29.95**
PUBLISHER:	**Mach-Ina Coral Gables, FL**



The rabble have gone to the streets in response to the shortage of food. London is in chaos, and a reluctant Parliament has ordered the bulk of the British army home to deal with the crisis. Riots in Manchester have resulted in eleven dead and hundreds injured. The Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, has just announced that the Corn Law will not be repealed and, further, that a series of six new laws have been passed to stop these "rabble rousing Radicals!". *An attempt has been uncovered to assassinate the entire Cabinet, seize the Bank of England, and establish a provisional government.* In your few short years as Chancellor of the Exchequer you have seen Great Britain go from victory over Napoleon's France to hunger and panic. *And this was only your third turn....*

In MACH-INA's new game, *Chancellor of the Exchequer*(CE), you are given the task of taking Britain's 1805 economy and developing it into a well balanced, dynamic whole. As the first paragraph might suggest, the historical figures did not have an easy time of this, and neither will you! The initial situation is one which can foster rapid growth and a self sustaining cycle of industrial and social development, or lead to a dismal and bloody disaster with you as the one the angry mobs are demanding. Which of these two extremes shall be most closely approached will be determined by the decisions that you make.

Beginning in 1805, and continuing in five year turns until 1915, CE gives you twenty-two turns in which to develop eight uncoordinated regions into a modern state. Your goal is to merge each of these regions as functioning parts of Great Britain's economy and to accumulate at least 55,000 pounds Sterling. To merge a region into the Great Britain display, it must meet strict requirements which are dependent upon the number of ports, canals, and railroads the province contains and how much trade it does within its borders and with other regions (modified by the difficulty level selected). Each of these regions begin with a certain level of resources which could include farms, coal mines, or iron mines. They also begin with a certain amount of transportation (ships or trains) and possibly manufacturing (factories). It is in the way you manage these resources and your transportation, and the locating of your factories that the outcome of the game depends.

Of your eight regions (South England, Cornwall-Anglia, Midlands, Wales-Bristol, Lancaster, York, Northumberland, and Scotland) only three are self sufficient, having regional sources of food, coal, iron, and sufficient transportation and manufacturing to use them. All of the others produce one or more of the resources or are centers of manufacturing dependent upon the others for raw materials. You must take these regions and, by trading their produced raw materials from one to another, so distribute them that your production capacity will be able to efficiently produce the equipment needed to boost production in the mines (drills), raise farm productivity (tractors), and increase manufacturing capacity (steam engines). Added to this, you must build an adequate number of ships and trains, and the canals and railroads for them to use in order to do this. The final word is that the key to success is *trade.*

TRADE, ETC ....

Each turn is divided into five stages, and between each you are given an opportunity to trade. Each item traded, whether within a region or from one to another, uses Transportation Points and money. (Transportation Points are generated by the ships or trains in the province.) Before the first stage, *Produce*, it could be necessary to trade money from one region to another in order to pay the workers and to buy any surplus crops produced or the less expensive American cotton.

Between the first and the second stage, *Manufacture*, you must transfer all of the goods produced to the regions in which they will be used. This must be done even if they are to be used in the region which produced them. The only exception is the food consumed by the populace, as this needn't be processed. This is the most important segment of trading taking place in the turn, so take your time. Your ability to produce commodities and to use these to develop your regions, and whether or not your people will starve is dependent upon the decisions made at this time. Are the resources distributed in proportion to what you want to make in each of your industrial regions? If not, then you could find yourself wasting precious resources or manufacturing ability.

After the Manufacture stage, and before the *Consume* stage, you must trade the crops and goods which which are to be consumed. Failure to have sufficient food in a province will cause starvation, and the goods need to be distributed in such a way so as to gain the greatest return. It is during the Consume phase, that goods are traded with the local populace and with the colonies.

Before the next stage, *Allocate*, the tools, ships, locomotives, factories, or arms produced are trades to the regions which will use them. You might, for example, trade tools from the industrial region of Lancaster to the mining region of Wales-Bristol so that drills for the coal mines or tractors for its farms could be built. During the Allocate stage you are able to transfer the population of each region into the various sectors (farming, coal mining, iron mining, manufacturing, transportation, the military, or Australia) so that there will be efficient use of the population, avoiding unemployment. This is important, as unemployed workers tend to create civil unrest (remember the first paragraph?).

Before the final stage, *Develop*, the money needed to buy the ports, canals, and railroads available in the next phase must be sent to the developing region. There is no joy in having built ships or trains for a region and then being in the middle of the Develop stage before noticing that you can't afford the canal or railroad needed. (If possible, you should avoid the possibility of *clogged canals*, or *derailed trains*, as either will cause a stupendous waste of money.) Also, as you would expect, trains can not be used in a region until a railroad has been built.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Every region is initially assigned levels of three factors: *Social Level*, *Technological Level*, and an over all *Development Level*. Both the Social level and the Technological Level of a region are dependent upon its Development Level. And, between the three of them, they affect most of the game functions to one degree or another.

The Social level, when combined with a region's population, helps to determine the demand of the locals for consumer goods. It is also used to determine how many people are able to be employed in the farm and mining sectors, and the amount of machinery usable in the mines.

A region's Technological Level, along with the current year's date, determines the price received for the finished goods. It is used to set the limit of tractors which may be used by a given number of farmers, and the number steam engines which can be used by the factory hands employed. Finally, as the Technological Level increases, the amount of manufacturing able to be done by the regions factories also increases.

Finally, a region's Development Level, besides determining the level of the other two factors, is the factor which sets the price paid to the miners, the factory workers, and for a region's surplus crops. This tends to counter the other two factors which cause the economy to grow, making a balanced system which should, if handled right, favor the side of growth. The most important feature of the Development Level is that a region must reach a certain level before it can be merged with the Great Britain display. Not too difficult a task for the more developed regions, but for backwards regions it can prove difficult.

BASIC STRATEGIES

There are three critical problems which confront a player. The first of these, in chronological order, is potential starvation in many regions. In the early part of the game, the majority of the tool production should go to making tractors. Also, you should buy *every* surplus crop available, as they will only get more costly as the game progresses. Over all, a two to one ratio of farmers to tractors will insure an adequate supply of food even in the worst of turns. While this may seem impossible at first, it will eventually be possible as your well fed factory workers produce an ever increasing number of tools for tractor production.

The second problem which will be faced is the shortage of transportation. With the increase in crop production and the increase in the output of mines, you will soon find yourself with surplus materials unable to be traded. The tempting solution to this is to build trains, as these generate more transportation points than ships. This, however, should be avoided early in the game, as the cost of the trains will drain your infant economy and can only run where railroads have previously been built (an option only available in the more developed regions). Ships are definitely the preferred choice early in the game, as they can be used in or transferred to any region. Some provinces can build ships more cheaply, so pay careful attention to the cost in each region.

Raising the overall amount of Manufacturing Points is not subject to any easy solution. The regions will reach maximum employment levels early, after which only two methods will be available: raising the Development Level, and therefore the Technological Level of a province; and building more steam engines for its factories. While either will work, the latter has a distinct disadvantage in the first turns of the game. Building steam engines too early will drain the supply of tools for tractors and drills, without which the supply of coal and iron will be inadequate by 1815 and the spectre of starvation will return. The conflicting demands for tools can be best solved by specialization, with each of the primary manufacturing regions making tools for goods, or drills, or steam engines. This, of course, must be moderated by the demands caused by the first two problems.

CRITIQUE

CE is an enjoyable game, which could have been made better by making it more user friendly. The first problem is in its instruction booklet. Most of the information needed is there, but finding it may not always be possible. To counter this problem, the program does includes a very good *Help* option. There is also an analysis section which will evaluate your progress on a region by region basis, stating the overall efficiency of the region and which sectors need further development.

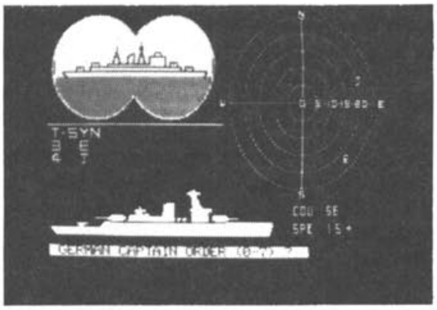
This latter feature is most useful due to the second factor in the struggle between you and the computer; the need to record the information on the regional displays for use from one stage to another. Each stage requires information from all eight of the regions in order for you to make adequate decisions. Unless you make a chart for all of the regions which can be altered stage by stage, the only alternatives are to use their print screen option (which only works with Epson® format printers) or to have an excellent memory. The lack of either of these latter two options will slow the game play down considerably.

My final complaint concerns the programs graphics, or rather the lack of them. The entire game is text and charts, with little use of graphics. The simple use of a map of Great Britain, showing the regions, their resources, and their levels of development would have been both useful and added to the game's aesthetic appeal.

CONCLUSIONS

In the final analysis, Chancellor of the Exchequer will succeed or fail as a game you would like, based upon your enjoyment of economic simulations. Judged as such, the quality of the simulation and the challenge to your ability to succeed greatly out weigh any of its negative aspects. If, on the other hand, you have become jaded by the smooth flowing, less demanding games now available on the market, and are not very interested in the economic difficulties in a developing early industrial nation, then this game may not be your cup of tea. In my case, even as I write this I am plotting ways of building Scotland into the economic center of Great Britain. After all, what does England have to trade half so dear as Scotland?

UNDER SOUTHERN SKIES



NAME:	**UNDER SOUTHERN SKIES**
TYPE:	**Strategy/Wargame**
SYSTEM:	**Apple II**
FORMAT:	**Disk**
# PLAYERS:	**1 or 2**
AUTHOR:	**Owen P. Hall, Jr.**
PUBLISHER:	**Avalon Hill Game Co. Baltimore, Maryland**

Captain Hans Langsdorff lowered his binoculars, his red eyes burning from vainly trying to pierce the gray mist. He blinked his eyes and returned to scanning the horizon. There he was. The *verdammt* Englishman was creeping out of the mist to attempt another futile assault on the GRAF SPEE.

Under Southern Skies (USS) is a combination strategic and tactical level game of naval warfare, with the action taking place in the South Atlantic shipping lanes. USS may be played either solitaire or as a two player game. In the two player game, however, many players will feel like the German player doesn't have enough to do, as there is only one German warship. Nevertheless, the German side is challenging to play in the strategic version.

The game mechanics start out bearing a resemblance to an earlier SSI game, *Pursuit Of The Graf Spee*. Once one gets to the tactical display, however, there is a great deal of difference. USS has added a silhouette for both the attacking ship and its target and a radar screen to show the relative positions of the ships in the engagement. When there is an air attack, the screen shows the planes moving toward the GRAF SPEE'S silhouette. When ships are sunk, the screen shows an explosion on the target silhouette. USS also allows the players to establish the game within a more flexible time frame than the earlier, more historically bound, game.

USS is extremely interesting and challenging to play. It does suffer from some problems, however. Many of the problems with the game begin in the weak documentation. For example, the documentation for the operational commands doesn't tell the German NOT to type the parenthesis around the x,y coordinates when the prompt for *Order 5* (Altmark Movement) is given with the x and y placed in parentheses. In our first game, one German captain spent nearly one half hour trying to get the program to take his order. A similar misunderstanding arises in the tactical rules. The use of the parenthetical expression (Graf Spee only) after command *4.1.3* (Fire Main and Secondary Guns) makes it appear that the only armament available to the allied player is his torpedoes. I hesitated much too long to use my main guns during my first game because I didn't think my shells could actually penetrate the Graf Spee's armor. The parenthesis should only follow command *4.1.2*.

A more significant problem than documentation is to be found in actually playing the tactical portion of the game. If a ship's bridge is hit and sustains maximum damage, control of the ship is supposed to be transferred to the aft tower. Yet, the program has no order for allowing this procedure to take place. If the Allied player orders the ship to maintain course, he is told that he cannot do this because of the loss of the bridge. If he tries to change course, he can't do that either, of course. Unfortunately, the only command that works in this situation is the one to disengage. This is a frustrating glitch, as I would often rather sink than disengage in the tactical battle.

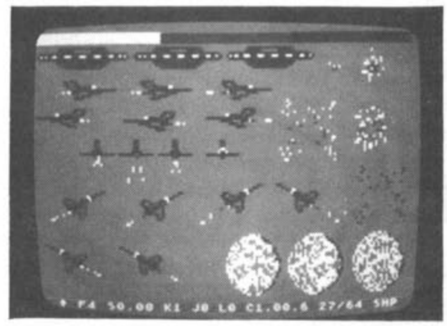
The strategic hints on page 14 of the documentation are generally helpful. The German will normally be able to elude the British if he avoids high density coastal areas. The Allied player should note, however, that since fuel availability plays an important factor in the game, it is important to patrol the neutral ports. In the tactical game, the book is right in suggesting an aggressive offensive stance. The Allied *must* follow the suggested **NELSON** tradition, but remember to change course at least ten degrees after the Graf Spee fires on him. This will cause the German captain to have to retarget his guns. While allowing the Allied player to keep his general vector aimed at the Graf Spee during the entire tactical game.

USS is a fascinating game to play. As a miniatures fan, I've always been interested in games which involve "blind play" and USS does a very good job in this (Exception: Once the Allied commodore orders an air strike, the alert German captain will know where the Allied ships are, since the program does not erase the positions at that particular point. However, once the Allied commodore is in that position, it most likely doesn't matter what the German captain knows about enemy positions.). Indeed, USS's strategic game could serve as a very good referee for a miniatures campaign within the South Atlantic. In that case, of course, the letters representing various ships on the strategic display could represent task forces, too. It would certainly save a lot of book work to let USS referee the strategic movement.

USS has a few relatively minor problems as enumerated above, but it makes up for them in the graphic presentation. As a visiting friend who played the game said, "You really feel like your at the 'Con.'" USS is a versatile, interesting and challenging game if one is willing to overlook spelling errors, an occasional visible line number from the program and the flaws mentioned above.

Johnny Wilson

MOVIE MAKER



NAME:	**Movie Maker**
SYSTEM:	**Atari 48K**
FORMAT:	**Disk**
AUTHOR:	**Interactive Picture Systems**
PRICE:	**$ 60.00**
PUBLISHER:	**Reston Publishing Company Reston, VA**

Movie Maker (MMTK) is a one-of-a-kind program for developing your own computer-animated visual sequences, or "movies". This program places you in both the director's chair and at the artists drawing board. You devise the action, set the scenes, create the actors, props, and background, and playback your creation as a complete movie.

MMTK is comprehensive in the tools that it provides for creating and manipulating shapes and animating them. Plus, it includes a disk full of demo movies that were obviously done with the aid of a professional artist. Because the program allows you to do so much (there are over fifty commands or key stroke sequences to select from), there is much to be learned before you can turn loose your imagination to create a finished product.

The publishers call Movie Maker a "tool kit" but it's more like a combination construction set and tool kit for both building and refining (or tinkering with) animated

shapes. The kind of animation you create is similar to a flip book (you know, where you flip the corner pages of the book and still characters seem to move). Of course, the sequences you create with MMTK are much more than line drawings on still backgrounds. Much of the computers ability to manipulate images and color in memory is brought into play.

The instruction booklet for MMTK is almost ninety pages. And, everyone of them is packed with important information on how to work the program. Even though there's an exercise to introduce you to the program, there's no way to create anything of value without several hours of studying the manual, and many, many more of experimenting. These do not have to be grueling hours, but they must be spent nevertheless. NOTE: In early editions of the program the documentation contained a disconcerting error in the introductory exercise. After completing step 5 on page 4 (typing "DOG" and pressing return), a screen full of dog shapes did NOT appear as the documentation indicated. If you have this early version you must next press the arrow keys to move the lighted Selector Bar over the word "COMPOSE" then press return. The screen full of dog shapes should appear.

There are four main modes in MMTK: Compose, Record, Playback, and Smooth. In Compose you create the components of your animation masterpiece, in Record you put the pieces together in an animation sequence, in Smooth you sit back while the program smooths out the animation and eliminates the flicker, and in Playback you view your completed movie.

Within each of the main modes there is a myriad of sub- utilities and commands for creating and manipulating the graphic elements that make up your movie files. Some of the features are: drawing with the joystick using a specified color, creating a window so you can move an image or duplicate it, instantly creating a mirror image of your shape, zooming in to magnify the image, and defining a series of shapes as an animation sequence. Other features in the Compose mode include changing colors, swapping colors already on the screen, defining speed of frame change, erasing, and restoring erasures.

Features of the Record mode include several of animation commands (such as setting frame rate and setting the number of times an animation sequence is to repeat) and a full range of editing commands for easily accessing and editing any part of your movie. The Record mode is also where you add the sound. Considerably less can be done with the sound than graphics. You cannot create new sounds; you can only select from the 32 provided (eight per each of the Atari's four voices). However, sounds from different voices can be be played simultaneously.

Actually making a simple movie would go something like this. First, you plan the basic movie: characters, storyline, setting. You then follow a series of steps to draw the characters in different positions that, when later "flipped", will give the illusion of motion. Next, you define the background. Then, you record each of the characters, one after the other, to make a composite. Finally, you add enhancements such as text and music then smooth it all out and there you have it, ready for playback ....a movie.

Got that? .... No? Well, let's try it with a more concrete example. Let's say you wanted to make a short movie of a girl throwing a pie into a boy's face. First, you plan — asking all the questions a professional animator would ask (and answer) before putting pencil to paper. For example, do they enter from the left, or right, or are they both already on screen at the beginning? What do they look like? How big are they? What are they wearing? Next, you define the actors as shapes. In our movie there are three "actors": the girl, the boy, and the pie.

You must draw each actor in each position that it will assume during the movie. To animate walking, for example, you must define the actor with the left foot forward, feet even as if in mid stride, and right foot forward — with arms moving appropriately in opposition to the foot movement. While this part of the task is by no means easy, it's not as difficult as it sounds because MMTK allows you to do things such as duplicate shapes then make changes to them. In our movie, for example, we could draw the basic boy walking in mid stride, duplicate him twice, then make appropriate changes by erasing and re-drawing his arms and legs. For drawing the pie, we would need to define the pie in a horizontal position, at forty-five degrees, in a vertical position, and splattering in a vertical position.

Next, comes the background (things that don't move in the movie). On a special background page, you would draw the setting. For our movie we could make the setting a picnic. This means drawing bushes, perhaps a picnic table, and any other props that might add to the picnic atmosphere.

Okay, here's what we have so far: Three boy shapes — each in a different walking position that makes up a walking sequence; several girl shapes — in a sequence of walking positions and movements for picking up the pie; and, the several pie shapes in a sequence that includes being level, in flight, and splattering positions.

Now, we're ready to "record". Recording is a process of defining where and when on the screen each of the shapes that you've drawn will appear. The limitation here is that MMTK allows only 300 frames of animation (or 300 "pages" if you're still thinking in terms of the flip book analogy).

You activate the record mode, select your shapes one at a time and add them as a sequence to the movie. In our Pie Movie, we might start out with our picnic background, then add the boy walking to the position where we plan for the pie to hit him. We'd

CHIP & FERB

by Mark Eliot



then back up to the beginning of the movie and add the girl going through her motions of walking to the the picnic table, moving her arms as if lifting the pie and throwing it. Then, we'd back up to the beginning one more time and add the pie shapes that we defined earlier. Finally, we'd send the completed composite through the Smooth mode to get rid of the flicker that occurs during "crude" animation.

Now, as hard as it may be to believe, in the above description of "The Making of Pie Movie", I made the process much simpler than it actually is. But at last.... Tah-Dah !!! .... we have a movie. Now we can have some fun with it: changing colors, adding sound, adding text, changing the size of the characters (for example, we could make our pie double size with just a few key strokes), adding new positions to our shapes to make the action seem more realistic. Adding additional characters/shapes. MMTK encourages you to experiment.

One thing to keep in mind as you create, experiment, and have fun is that MMTK allows you to go only as far as your own artistic talents will take you. If you already know how to apply drawing techniques such as size, perspective, shading, contour lines, overlapping, and foreshortening, then you're over a great hurdle in creating attractive movies. However, if you don't know how to draw, this program won't make you look like a better artist than you really are.

If you're a dabbler who is looking for a simple drawing program that's easy enough for junior to use, MMTK is probably not that program — instead, try "Paint", also published by Reston, or some similar drawing program. (Although, rumor has it that Reston is developing an "easier to use" version of MMTK that allows input via a Koala Pad.)

If you're a programmer looking for a utility for developing animation routines that can be handily incorporated into your games, MMTK is not that program either — although the documentation does mention that a "professional" version of MMTK is available for just such a purpose.

So, who is MMTK for? Let me suggest some possible uses of the program: presenting "attract" animation in stores or at a convention booth; passing time creatively; making personalized, animated greeting cards to send to fellow Atari owners; showing off what your Atari can do while entertaining friends. In other words, if you have a need, or desire, for presenting non-game, impressive animation sequences, then MMTK won't let you down. But, to fully enjoy MMTK you must have the deep personal conviction that "getting there is half the fun".

David P. Stone

BRUCE LEE



NAME:	**Bruce Lee**
TYPE:	**Arcade**
SYSTEM:	**Atari now, Apple, PC,Jr, C-64 coming**
FORMAT:	**Disk and Tape**
AUTHOR:	**Ron J. Fortier**
PRICE:	**$34.95**
PUBLISHER:	**Datasoft Chatsworth, CA**

I don't know what "martial arts" is, but I know what I like. And, I like *Bruce Lee*(BL). It delivers all the foot kicking, fist jabbing, quick ducking action-packed adventure you'd expect from a good grade B, martial arts movie.

The objective of this game is to find and destroy the wizard and claim his infinite

wealth and immortality (you might ask, what good is one without the other?) Along the way to the Wizard's you continually must battle a ninja (attired in a traditional, all black costume) and a Green Yamo (a scantily-clad, green sumo-like wrestler).

The Bruce Lee character is pink with black hair and pants and no shirt; and, as an added "nice touch", he wears black gloves. He advances from room to room (twenty screens in all) by leaping up and taking lanterns that hang from the ceilings. This opens the way or turns off perils such as deadly "pan" lights, "electrical charges" in narrow passages, and "t'sung lin", exploding bushes that suddenly appear then disappear.

After booting the disk, you are forced to sit through 12 bars of an Oriental theme song (this is, perhaps, the only part of game that I found truly irritating). Then, the action begins. You are at the wizard's oriental fortress, a place where Fuji-type mountains tower in the background. Almost immediately, a ninja appears, advancing toward you and brandishing a bokker (a hardwood stick meant for maiming). You draw back, turn and charge! You go into a flying kick, stunning the ninja and sending him back a few feet. You repeat your kicking assault and the ninja disappears.

Enter the Green Yamo. This over-weight fella' is anxious to do a break-dance on your face. Despite his apparent weight, he's fast and can do everything Bruce can, except climb and duck. However, to even things out, his legs appear to be just a little longer (or faster?) than Bruce's. This means you can't kick a Green Yamo around the way you can a ninja — unless you land the first foot. This makes for a fair, but tough, fight.

There's more to BL than kicks and chops. Good defense counts, too, just like in "real" martial arts. For example, when trapped between a Green Yamo and a ninja, a good strategy is to duck quickly and let the Yamo's running kick hit the ninja. Another defensive strategy is to leap up and climb a trellis to safety. (During the leaping maneuver, "Lee" looks more like a "Nureyev".)

BL offers some nice player options not commonly found on arcade-type games: you (as Bruce Lee) against a computer-controlled Green Yamo and ninja, you and another player taking turns being Bruce, or you against a Yamo controlled by another player (in this case, the Yamo can climb a trellis to give chase). Also, there's a unique option for left-handed joystick control of a right-handed joystick.

All player movements are under joystick control. The range of maneuvers includes: running kick, chop, duck, jump, and leap. Learning the moves is easy, mastering when to use them is the challenge. There's good correlation between joystick movement and on-screen character movement; however, once or twice during the play of the game Bruce became "stuck" on a trellis. At first I thought I was going to have to restart the game, but the Green Yamo came along and kicked me down.

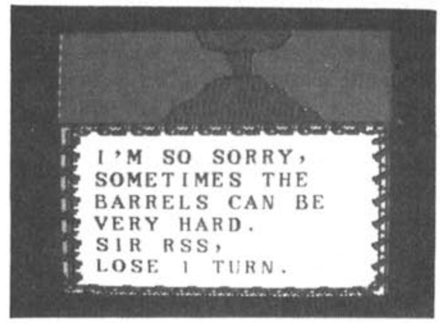
You score points by entering new rooms, gathering lanterns, delivering blows to the ninja and Yamo, and by destroying the wizard. Plus, you gain an extra Bruce Lee at 40,000 points and every 30,000 points after that. Your score is continually updated at the top of the screen. Sorry, no high score save to disk.

You start out with five "falls" (read "lives".) You loose one fall after sustaining several blows from either the ninja or the Green Yamo. The ninja disappears after two blows, the Green Yamo after three. Within a few seconds their identical replacements appear.

I'm sure there are some who will object to this game's violent nature and still others who will object because it tends to celebrate a man who was allegedly a part of the drug culture. Those points may be arguable, but what's clear is that BRUCE LEE is good arcade-type game for anybody who's looking either for some solo action or for some fun head-to-head (foot-to-gut, fist-to-face, etc.) fighting.

David P. Stone

CHIVALRY



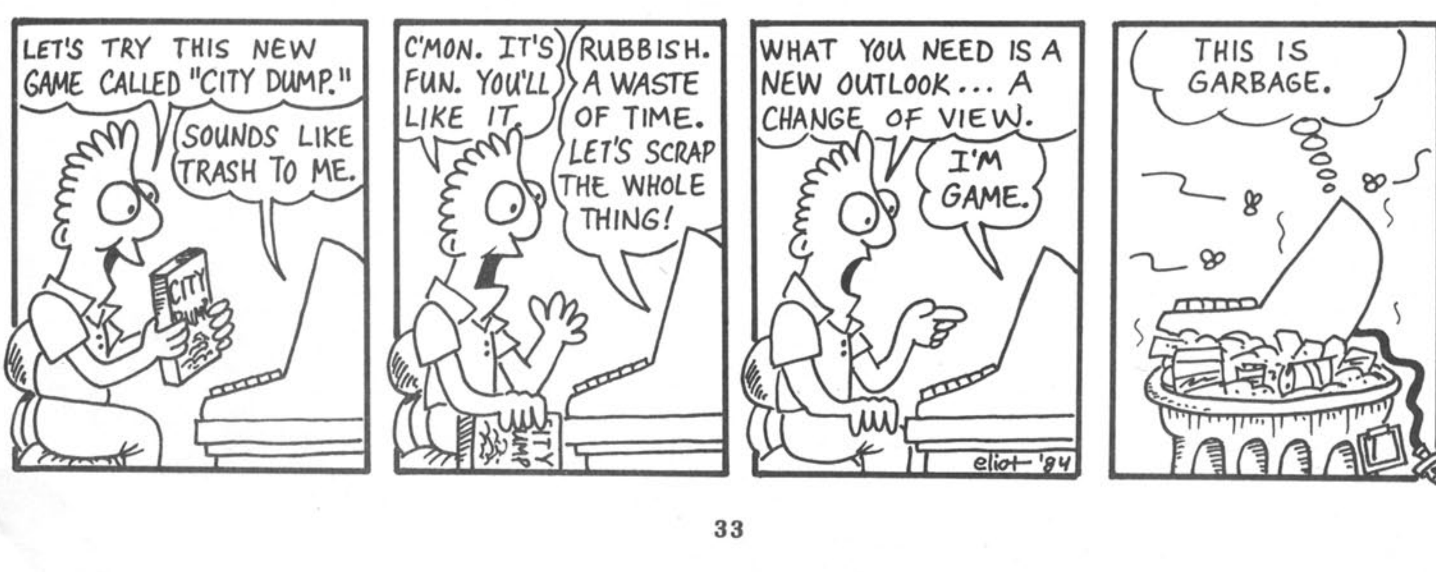
NAME:	**Chivalry**
SYSTEM:	**Apple II**
FORMAT:	**Disk**
#PLAYERS:	**1-4**
AUTHORS:	**Richard Hefter** **J. & S. Worthington**
PRICE:	**$49.95**
PUBLISHER:	**Xerox Education Publications** **Middletown, CT**

Lady Jennifer pulled back on the reins of the team and attempted to back the wagon under the miller's window. "Oh, dear!" milady exclaimed in frustration, "there goes another sack of flour. The miller really ought to make them of sterner stuff." Seeing his precious flour dissemble in the wind, the miller decided to give Lady Jennifer a piece of his mind, nobility or not. "You clumsy oaf! I'm ruined!" Lady Jennifer went on to win the game, even after failing in some of the arcade games within the larger game. That is one of the best points about this family game. One doesn't have to master every phase of it in order to win. Even the least coordinated member of the family can win.

Chivalry is a family game built around the medieval ideal of *noblesse oblige*. It is a series of arcade games and mini-adventure

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by Mark Eliot



scenarios built around a boardgame format. Unlike many games which use both a board and the computer, the computer portion of the game contains some very fine graphics. In fact, the game could actually be played without the board, but the players would lose some of the enjoyment of immediately being able to compare the progress of their token with the tokens of the other players. The board also assists the players by visually directing them toward the goal (The Black Knight's Castle) and providing a sense of accomplishment when they get by an obstacle.

Perhaps, one of the best things in the game's favor is that one doesn't have to master each feature within the game in order to advance or even, win. My nine year old daughter (Lady Jennifer) gets very frustrated with arcade games of the traditional sort where one must master one screen before moving on to the next. In CHIVALRY, one loses a turn or goes back some spaces, but is never completely defeated by a screen. This does a lot for morale, especially for some of us who will never be known as coordinated. Another positive difference between Chivalry and traditional arcade games is that each screen is a completely different game with a different challenge. The hill may seem to be *deja vu* of DONKEY KONG or CANNONBALL BLITZ, but the mill (described above), the archer's meet, the dart game at the Den of Thieves Inn, the willow path and the laurel maze are entirely different. My personal favorite involves jousting at either the Templar's Castle or the Lists.

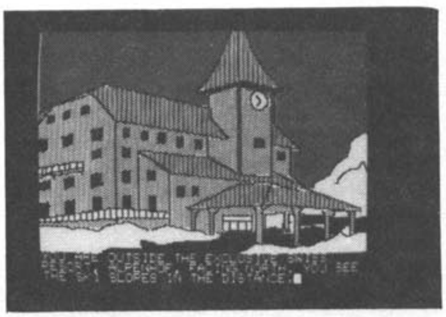
of course, Chivalry is also an educational game. Besides the background color of a historic period, the game facilitates learning in at least one other way. Each player must read a large text description of his move and his challenge on the screen. The text is easy to read and is surrounded by pleasant graphics. The text appears on the screen in short panels. Panels linger long enough for most players to read them and faster readers may take advantage of the "fast text" feature of pressing the space bar to advance to the next panel. In this way, slow or beginning readers are not embarassed by missing any of the important information, clues or instructions presented in the panels. The improving reader, however, has the incentive of learning how to speed up the game. If the panels are still moving too fast, the player may pause the game by pressing the escape key.

Another possible educational feature is that of making decisions. Several of the mini-adventure scenarios require the player to make a choice. For example, a noble arriving at the Market are invited to choose between a fine wine, a common food and a bear potion. Seeing a bear cave two spaces ahead, the precocious adventurer will buy the bear potion. The astute noble will also listen to passerbys about bandits, special numbers, and their fortune. If the adventurous noble can remember this information, it will help him/her at a later time.

Chivalry is a delightful family game. It is, of course, to most adult computer games what *LIFE* is to adult boardgames, extremely simple. Yet, it is a game that offers some interesting challenges to adults, as well as children. It will take several playing sessions before even Dad has mastered all the screens. Even then, it's nice to have a game that the youngsters don't have to feel intimidated about and are willing and even excited about playing. Once they've played Chivalry, how are you going to keep them away from Fantasy Role Playing? it's not going to be possible!

Johnny Wilson

THE ALPINE ENCOUNTER



NAME:	**The Alpine Encounter**
TYPE:	**Graphic Adventure Game**
SYSTEM:	**Apple II**
FORMAT:	**Disk**
#PLAYERS:	**1**
PRICE:	**$59.95**
AUTHOR:	**Carol Anderson**
PUBLISHER:	**Ibid, Inc. Hartford, CT**

The Alpine Encounter is a graphics adventure game, the first in Ibids' *Vodac Adventure Series*. Some background information, as well as a telegram from your boss, Freedman, await you as you open the box.

You learn that, at the Peking Imperial Museum, two people broke in and stole a vase dating back to the first Ming Dynasty.... While, six thousand miles away at a military installation in the Rockies, a second pair of men snuck into a secured portion of the base, broke open a large military safe and removed a large blue envelope, stenciled with "Stealth Missile". The men escaped from the room of the installation in a helicopter.

Then you are brought back to the present with the following message from your boss.

You, Agent 456, must immediately fly to Alpenburg and check in at the Alpenhof Ski Resort. You are then to contact Agent 487 regarding Vocac's involvement in a conspiracy which would give Vodac world domination. Agent 487 is operating under cover as an exchange student at the resort. You have only twelve hours to complete your mission.

As you boot your disk, you find yourself standing in front of the Alpenhof Ski Resort. First check in at the front desk. Otherwise you will not be able to wander through the hotel in search of clues (the hotel premises are only available to paying guests).

At various times throughout the game, you will come in contact with the main characters. When you meet them be friendly and ask them questions. For, only by interviewing the characters can you hope to find the clues, solve the mystery, and foil Vodac. To get more background, you might want to go to the hotels' newsstand and buy a paper.

After you search (map) the hotel, you probably will want to try your skill at the animated skiing sequence (you do need to ski to complete the game). There is a beginners and an expert slope (you can choose either one at the beginning of the run). This was a nice change of pace which was made additionally interesting by the fact that you are being shot at while skiing down the slope.

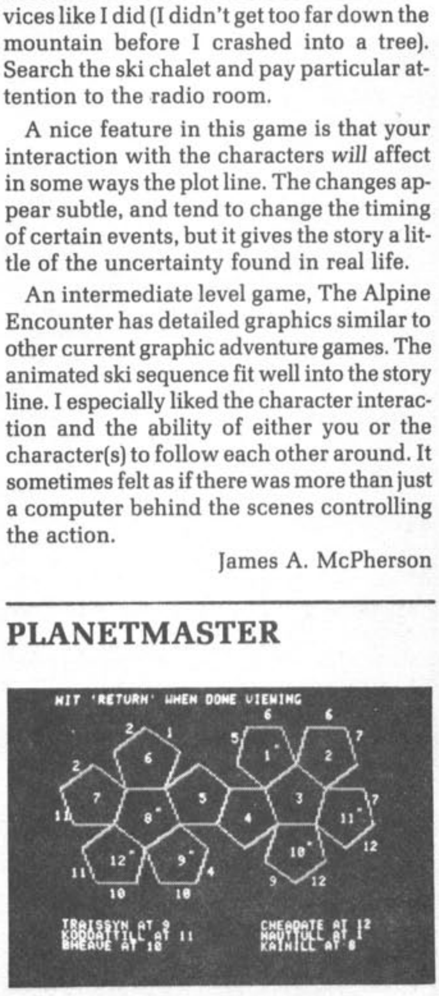
A short distance down the ski slope, you will arrive at the ski chalet. You can either ski there or be carried there for medical services like I did (I didn't get too far down the mountain before I crashed into a tree). Search the ski chalet and pay particular attention to the radio room.

A nice feature in this game is that your interaction with the characters *will* affect in some ways the plot line. The changes appear subtle, and tend to change the timing of certain events, but it gives the story a little of the uncertainty found in real life.

An intermediate level game, The Alpine Encounter has detailed graphics similar to other current graphic adventure games. The animated ski sequence fit well into the story line. I especially liked the character interaction and the ability of either you or the character(s) to follow each other around. It sometimes felt as if there was more than just a computer behind the scenes controlling the action.

James A. McPherson

PLANETMASTER



NAME:	**Planetmaster**
TYPE:	**Strategy**
SYSTEM:	**Apple**
FORMAT:	**Disk**
AUTHOR:	**Gary Cuba**
PRICE:	**$24.95**
PUBLISHER:	**Magnetic Harvest P.O. Box 255 Hopkins, S.C. 29061**

Planetmaster Jasper's ubiquitous smile was eclipsed by a dark cloud of displeasure as he stepped over the lifeless carcasses of the jaghers. "What a miscalculation!" he muttered across his protruding lower lip, "I never would have guessed they were too far from the tetoles." He picked up the spoor of the surviving pair of jaghers and prepared to herd the almost extinct predators into the next zone. A wry smile crossed his face as he realized that herding these two creatures into a safer environment was roughly analogous to that classic planetmaster of Terran fame, Noah.

Planetmaster is a complex and challenging simulation. It will thrill those who have read the science fiction of Piers Anthony and Frank Herbert with their plots revolving around the necessity of conservation for survival. In Planetmaster, the player is given the opportunity to select six endangered alien species and transport them to a terraformed, dodecahedronal Space Sanctuary Satellite (SSS). The SSS is the player's own eco-system to manage to the extent of his ability on one of five levels of play (Novice Planettender, Journeyman Planetkeeper, Professional Planetkeeper, Advanced Planetologist, and Planetmaster). Each turn of the game represents one season of a planetary year with four seasons. The player determines the length of the game in years (five is the recommended length) and has the option of continuing with the same species at the end of that number of years.

The game begins with the player selecting the six endangered species he/she would like to attempt to preserve. It is at this point that the game makes its most extensive use of graphics. The game offers two different graphic views of the virtually unlimited number of species available. Unfortunately, all of the species look suspiciously canine to this reviewer. It is only *after* the selection process that one can find out the vital information on the species' dietary habits. The dearth of information available at the selection stage limits the initial phase of selection to that of a guess. Fortunately the author indicates modifications that can be made to the unprotected program so that a specie's biological characteristics (including diet) can be viewed prior to selecting species. While admitting that this may increase the educational value of the game, the designer notes that this modification removes some of the challenge of the game.

In the next phase of the turn, *the placement phase*, the player must research by means of several different descriptions and tables. Here the player must balance the temperature, rainfall and genetically engineered crop production of the available zones with the particular needs of each species. The player must balance the need for one species to have optimal temperature and crop production of its primary food group with the need of a predatory species to be in proximity to its prey. I found that this is the point at which it helps to take notes. Since you don't want to have to flash up the species' description during each seasonal change, it helps to write down the preferred diet characteristics of each species. Also, I found it to be helpful to try to place the species in a zone with approximately the same temperature as their optimal point and where the **first** listed food on their diet flourishes. It was also helpful to note on a separate chart the seasonal fluctuations of each food during the early years of the game in order to anticipate where I could move species for maximum advantage at a later point in the game, but an analogous season.

Next is the *results phase*. At this point, the player gets to see how each individual species is surviving within the assigned zone. The player must note the satisfaction index, the percentage of dietary efficiency, the demographics of births, deaths and starvation, and crop production or hunting success/failure. On this basis, the player is assigned a percentage score for the season's work and this is averaged into a cumulative rating. The cumulative rating will eventually determine the success or failure of the player (85% is considered successful at any of the 5 levels). After this rating is displayed, the game either: 1) moves on to the placement phase of the next season; 2) gives the player a final rating; or 3) invites the player to continue the game with the same species.

Those who insist on the pyrotechnics of game design (intricate graphics, sound effects and "real time" simulation) won't find any *bells and whistles* in this game. The major graphics displays are relatively static and uninteresting because the species' sketches are not dissimilar enough and the graphs don't fluctuate enough in a successful game to be interesting. However, those who find excitement in weighing data, mentally debating numerous possible decisions and making those "god-like" decisions of simulated life and death will find Planetmaster to be a game to be played over and over again. Educators will enjoy using the game as an introduction to the idea of eco-systems and wildlife conservation. The simulation not only sensitizes the player to the idea of wildlife preservation and management, but teaches the basic principle of ecological interdependance.

Planetmaster Jasper's face began to shine with the brightness of his characteristic smile. The pride of fatherhood beamed from his tanned visage as he admired the newborn jagher pups. "Noah," he thought, "didn't have anything on me."

Johnny Wilson

ATARI PLAYFIELD (Cont.)

ing Datamost's "Tails of Beta Lyrae"). It's true that some translations do put the sound through the TV speaker. But the TV speaker should be made to do more than go *"dinkety-dink-dink"*. The Atari has four voices—they should be used.

Third sore point: color. Hi-res animation that exploits the full potential of the Apple invariably loses something in the translation: usually, *red/orange*. Due to different hardware methods of handling color, straight translations are less colorful on the Atari. This is not because the Atari can show fewer colors, but because the programmer/publisher decided that a straight translation was "good enough" for the Atari owners.

Some might ask "what's the big deal about losing a color like red, at least the game was translated? Anyway, it's not the programmer's fault if the Apple can show red in the hi-res mode ad the Atari can't.

Well, first, the big deal about losing red is that it's often difficult to distinguish objects on the screen when they're all purple, green, black or white. Even though a hardware limitation is never the software designer's fault, what IS his or her fault is failing to take advantage of the built-in features which ARE there, like player/missile graphics and display interrupts.

Of course, it costs MONEY to re-design a game to capitalize on a different computer's special features. But, the publishers who do straight translations don't seem to have any qualms about charging us just as much as if they'd written the game from scratch. Publishers should be able to make a fair profit, but not by serving warmed-over, bland versions of Apple games to Atari owners.

One way to let the publishers know how you feel about mediocre translations or the kind of games and features that you'd like to see, is by sending back the warranty card with the information on the "Comments" line. "Warranty card??" you say? Yeah, you know, those little cards that fall out of the software packages, then get set aside or used as a bookmark. The warranty card is a direct line between you and the publisher. When the publisher receives your card, he knows he's getting a suggestion from a "known purchaser" of his products. That's a powerful incentive for him to listen. (Smart companies know that if they don't listen to the market place they'll soon go out of business.)

So, take a minute to fill out your warranty cards and write in your comments. The publishers want to produce games that sell. But, first you've got to tell them the kind of game you want to buy. If you don't like straight translations, say so. If you want more "two-player-at-the-same-time" (also known as "head-to-head") action games, jot it down. If you want more cooperative (instead of competitive) games, jot that down.

If you want to get what you want, you've gotta' speak your mind!

LEARNING GAME (Cont.)

can be accomplished with the use of a simulated musical keyboard or by directly entering the notes by musical notation. If you feel embarrassed by your own compositions, there are eight tunes "pre-recorded" on the disk. There are also guessing games to test your knowledge of notes and tunes. Children who can't read yet will have to be taught which keys control the game by someone who can read the manual as there are no clues on the screen. Otherwise, this is an easy program to use.

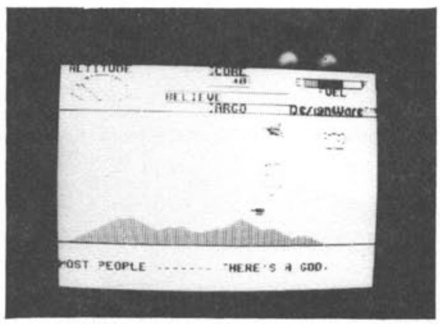
BASIC INFORMATION

NAME:	**Facemaker**
TYPE:	**Memory game**
SYSTEM:	**Apple II/IIe, Atari, C64, IBM**
FORMAT:	**Diskette**
AGES:	**3 to 8**
# PLAYERS:	**1**
PRICE:	**$34.95**
PUBLISHER:	**Spinnaker Software Cambridge, MA**

In this loosely-structured "game", you build a cartoon face by choosing among predefined eyes, nose, ears, mouth and hair. Once your creation is complete, you can animate it. Using a "programming language" with one-letter commands, you can make the face smile, wiggle its ears, stick its tongue out, and several other things. The result is a brief animated cartoon with appropriate sounds.

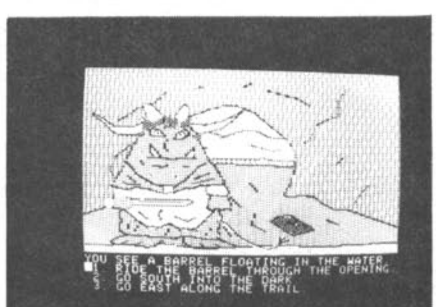
The younger kids usually collapse from hilarity at this point, but older people will want to go on to the last phase. Now the computer programs your face and you must copy the same sequence of expressions. It's a lot like the game of "Simon"; as long as you can repeat the sequence, the computer keeps adding more. The object is to see how long a string you can remember and repeat.

Obviously, FACEMAKER gives practice on memory and concentration. More than most games for pre-schoolers, it provides lots of examples of important computer-related concepts such as programming, menus of objects, and using the cursor to "point" and select. Do you suppose they'll do a version for Macintosh?



NAME:	**Spellicopter**
TYPE1:	**Word Recognition/Spelling**
SYSTEM:	**Apple II/IIe or IBM**
FORMAT:	**Diskette**
AGES:	**6 and up**
# PLAYERS:	**1**
PRICE:	**$34.95**
PUBLISHER:	**DesignWare San Francisco, CA**

This is a good word recognition/spelling game. Using keyboard or joystick, you must pilot your helicopter through an obstacle course of mountains, clouds, balloons, and hang-gliders to reach the secret letters. The letters are scrambled, you must pick them up in sequence to spell the secret word which fits in the sentence at the bottom. There are 40 groups of 10 words each already on disk — ranging from CAN to OUTRAGEOUS. Even better, you can make up new lists of your own so SPELLICOPTER can be used to practice any words (in any language!).



NAME:	**Troll's Tale**
TYPE:	**Adventure**
SYSTEM:	**Apple II+$ or IIe**
FORMAT:	**Diskette**
AGES:	**7 and up**
# PLAYERS:	**1**
PRICE:	**$29.95**
PUBLISHER:	**Sierra On-line Inc. Coarsegold, CA**

Here's another great adventure game for those who are just learning to read. It is very similar to Dragon's Keep (CGW Vol. 3, No. 4) but uses a slightly "older" vocabulary (second grade). This time we're exploring a fantasy underground empire. A naughty troll has taken 16 treasures from the Dwarf King; we're trying to help him get them back. Besides reading practice, the game gives practice in reasoning and logic. Mapping skills are not necessary to enjoy the game but they are encouraged. A large paper map is included, but it is incomplete and must be finished by the player. Sixteen colored stickers are used to mark the locations of the treasures. Keyboard skills are NOT required; the entire game uses only the spacebar and the RETURN key. Another winner from Sierra On-line!



NAME:	**Police Artist**
TYPE:	**Face Recognition**
SYSTEM:	**Apple II/IIe**
FORMAT:	**Diskette**
AGES:	**7 and up**
# PLAYERS:	**1**
PRICE:	**$34.95**
PUBLISHER:	**Sir-tech Software Ogdensburg, NY**

Sherlock Holmes noted that almost all of us can see, but very few can *observe*. Here's a game that will help you learn this skill. The basic idea is to take dozens of hairstyles, chins, eyes, noses, and mouths and mix them in any combination. Using this graphic "vocabulary", this game lets you do one of three things. Police Lineup gives you a quick look at a face and then challenges you to pick it out of a series of faces. Police Artist lets you look at a face and then try to reconstruct it piece by piece. In both games, increasing skill levels means more choices and greater similarity of choices. Off Duty lets you construct any combination of features you want. Kids get absolutely hysterical when they try to create a portrait of Mom or Dad. Police Artist is a better choice for eight years and up; Facemaker is a bigger hit with five and under.

NEW! For ATARI® 400/800™



SURVIVAL

You are stranded on the alien world of Coryphire. Your only chance of survival is to travel 340 kilometers to an abandoned research station. Unfortunately, the planet has difficult terrain, and is populated by several carnivorous — and hungry — life forms. Your skill and cunning are your main tools for survival. You will salvage as much as you can carry from your starship and begin your trek. With a fair amount of luck, your supplies should last — if you hurry!

SURVIVAL Computer Game recreates the struggle to survive on a hostile alien world. The computer controls the encounters and displays a map showing your location. Once in an encounter, you select how you are going to respond and what weapon you are going to fire. The computer then resolves the combat. The game contains three "Survival" games, and one "Hunt" game which turns the tables on the creatures of Coryphire. Several options which will further increase the number of situations which may be played may be selected by the players prior to the playing of each game.

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS

Determined to escape their dying planet, the Martians have launched an invasion on Earth. You are Mankind's only hope of stopping the invading aliens. Unprepared, and without knowledge of how to stop the awesome aliens, you must marshal the Human forces around London to attack the Martian invaders. Time is not on your side. Soon the Martian invaders will have the toehold they need to subjugate all Mankind — unless your desperate counterattacks succeed.

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS Computer Game recreates the life-and-death struggle between the Martians and the Humans, as depicted by H. G. Wells in his classic novel. You are the commander of the Human forces, and must deal with the computer-controlled Martian invaders. The game has six pre-set levels of play, as well as a game version which allows the player to create his own level by changing key variables prior to play. The screen depicts the area around London of 1896, the landing site of the Martian invasion in H. G. Wells' novel.



Atari is a registered trademark of Atari, Inc.

TASK FORCE COMPUTER GAMES are strategy games which allow players time to think out their best move. Atari® 400/800™ 16K and Atari® 410™ Cassette Player required for play. Joystick is required for SURVIVAL, and optional for THE WAR OF THE WORLDS. Program versions which allow the games to be replayed without reloading from the cassette tapes are included for players with a 32K machine.

TASK FORCE COMPUTER GAMES — The NEW FORCE in gaming.

TO MARKET (Cont.)

was intended to function in this way. However, there is really only one reasonable investment within that option, investing in second mortgages. Investing in second mortgages is a reasonable hedge against the downtrends in the real estate market *if* interest rates are high. But, that kind of investment won't accomplish much when both the market and the mortgage rates are down. I question whether it is probable that the housing market would be down at the same time as interest rates are down, yet Baron afforded me that frustrating environment. I would certainly like to see some of the figures on the data collection for the correlation between interest rates and the market. It certainly seems to this reviewer that the real estate market rises in inverse proportion to mortgage interest rates.

All three of these simulations have an educational value toward understanding our economic system. All three are fascinating games for one player to play. I prefer the games in the following order: *Tycoon*, *Millionaire*, and *Baron*. This order reflects the flexibility in investment strategies open to the player. Those who prefer long-term holding strategies will prefer them in opposite order. Blue Chip Software still needs to design a simulation where multiple players can participae in the same market environment. But until such are available, these will do very nicely.

COMMODORE KEY (Cont.)

look at the moves the computer is looking at, and the ability to save and restore games from disk. It comes with several games and chess puzzles. With *Chess!* (the subset version) you get a thorough set of tutorials on all phases of the game which are selected from a special menu. These include practice on moves just learned. This version is excellent for any beginner.

Considering these three, *Chess!* (the subset) for $29.95 is clearly the champion. I have seen the manual for Sargon III for the Apple. It appears that it's capabilities are very similar to *Chess 7.0* and lower priced at about $49.95. However, it is not yet scheduled to be released for the C64. Don't wait for it, enjoy *Chess!* now for $29.95.

SECOND—WE HAVE FLIGHT

If you are interested in flying an airplane, then there are three outstanding flight simulators available for you and your C64. All three properly use the joystick to control the plane's actions. The first is IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) from Academy Software ($39.95). This was the first of it's kind available for the C64. It offers a full set of instruments that lets you takeoff and then navigate, using only instruments, across challenging terrain to one of four available airports. The simulation is realistic, but flying by just a set of gauges is not that much fun.

The second two, Flight Simulator II and Solo Flight, will be reviewed by me in the next issue of CGW.

THIRD—WE HAVE ROLE PLAYING ADVENTURES

In the beginning, we had the *Temple of Apshai* from Epyx/Automated Simulations ($39.95). It was first available for the Commodore Pet/2001 series of computers with the C64 version significantly better. Then, along came *Telengard* from Avalon Hill ($23 on cassette, if you have time for it to load, $28 on disk). And finally we have *Ultima II* ($69.95) a big price for a very big game. (Ultima I will not be released for the C64).

Temple offers great graphics (though slow to display) and great sounds. The game includes over 200 rooms and 20 different types of monsters. Two other expansion modules are available if you want more of the same — *Upper Reaches of Apshai* and *Curse of Ra*. Your character can be created by distributing up to 20 points to the attributes of intelligence, intuition, ego, strength, constitution, and dexterity. First time adventurers can let the computer generate a character's attributes and starting amount of silver. The next step is supplying yourself with armor, weapons, and various magic potions and salves. This is done by bargaining with the storekeepers, which can be quite humorous. You are then sent off to explore the four levels, being able to cash in your treasures and save the game anytime you exit these levels. The manual is very descriptive.

Telengard is very similar to Temple but has 50 levels, each with 40,000 rooms (so they say). There are ten different monsters with varying levels of strength. Your starting character is created by distributing up to 18 points (it does accept more) to the attributes of strength, intelligence, wisdom, constitution, dexterity and charisma, but you are left to gather all your needs while wandering about. As you wish, you can stop at an inn to leave off your treasures. Your basic goal is to get points and survive. The game has many random events (good and bad) and is very fast paced. You are required to read screen messages quickly, before they disappear, and respond equally fast. The graphics are good but, as with Temple, the drawing of the walls takes some time. And if you wish, you may save the game to continue another day while in any inn. If you survive, the game can last for many days of playing.

Ultima is certainly the most extensive and comprehensive role playing adventure game available for the C64. There are not rooms, but rather smooth horizontal and vertical scrolling areas of water, grass, swamp, forest. You walk all throughout villages, towns, castles, dungeons and towers. The latter two are displayed in perspective. You can also travel to eight other planets, the sun, and to five time periods. For getting around you can walk or use a horse, frigate, plane, or rocket. (I said it was extensive!) There are ten types of residents to fight and four other types to transact with for information necessary to complete your quest.

Your character is created by distributing a total of ninety points to the attributes of strength, agility, stamina, charisma, wisdom, and intelligence with a minimum of ten points per attribute. You then get additional points in specific attributes by selecting a race (human, dwarven, elven, hobbit), a profession (fighter, thief, wizard, cleric), and a sex (male or female). Your character requires food to survive and specific items to accomplish the tasks necessary to defeat the evil enchantress. These items are bought, stolen, or won by battling those who wish you harm. The manual is very well written and the game is very enjoyable, challenging and humorous.

AND THE WINNERS ARE

If you want the best of what is currently available then I recommend *Chess!* (the Chess 7.0 subset), *Flight Simulator II*, and *Ultima II*. You may have noticed that the last two are the most expensive. But, it is far better that you spend more for these and get a lot of game for your money than buy any two others and pay as much (two good, but limited, games will easily cost you $70). These games will give you many many hours (even years!) of enjoyment.

TELEGAMING (Cont.)

old operating room technician from Riverside, California. N. T.'s complex game system includes an original computer program which he uses to determine combat results.

N.T., who is known by the handle "Allowyn" on GameSIG, organized his game by first uploading five detailed text files to GameSIG's online reference library. These files included an introduction to his world and the events leading up to "the crisis that is now upon us," a description of spells available to player characters, and a list of various character skills. N. T. filled his group with excited players as soon as they had a chance to read his introductory files. Here is an excerpt from "one man's tale of the destruction of Andelaine and the fall of the Order of Light":

> Adventurers, beware! There are forces loose upon this land; forces whose malevolence is unparalleled in all of recorded history. Do you despise life so much that you would pit your paltry weapons and insignificant magic against that which strives to conquer all? You do? Then let not this harbinger of mankind's doom stay you from your quest, for all men know that it is ill-advised to meddle with fools. But then, I am not long for this playground of horrors, so wait a bit, live a while longer, and let this tired old man tell you of that from which I flee, and which you seek. Eighty winters I have seen, and how I wish that the fates had been kind and cut my thread at seventy-nine....

Since January, N. T.'s players have ventured forth into danger twice weekly by posting their moves on GameSIG's message board. His group consists of players who live all across the United States and Canada, and includes novices as well as seasoned FRPG'ers. "Andelaine" is N.T.'s first experience with running a message board game. However, he is also simultaneously DM'ing this same scenario for a "live" group of friends.

I asked N.T. to compare his two gaming groups. His reply raised several interesting points: "The two games are as different as night and day. All of the players in the live game have 'died' at least once. The battles in the live game are more devastating, and the players make a lot more fatal mistakes. I think that some of this is attributable to the individual players, but most of it is the time factor for making decisions. The live game has, predictably, moved further along, and there is a lot less second-guessing and recriminating among the players. Also, the clues in the live game have to be much more obvious than in the board game since the players cannot re-read the moves. The moves in the live game tend to be much more forthright and daring, with less concern about dying."

Again, the issue of time delays cropped up. N. T. agreed with his fellow message board DMs that remote games allow for more extensive analysis before moves are posted. And, he felt that the pace, since it is less demanding, helps the neophyte gamer to avoid "panic moves." However, N. T. commented that there are problems in the slower play-by-message games: "A game that you could run through in a couple of months of once-a-week sittings, live, may take many months to complete on a BBS. This brings player turnover into issue much more. It can kill a game if you don't have a good starting team. The interaction between players in a message board game also tends to homogenize the players' moves somewhat. A player may not post a good, radical move for fear of being ridiculed on the board, in public, over a period of days. Nevertheless, the time between moves allows the DM to modify the system to take into account the new twists that the players come up with—twists that the DM never considered."

Message board games such as N.T.'s save participants the costs of real-time online games. By signing onto a system, quickly downloading the latest messages, and composing responses offline, players can limit their CompuServe connect charges to just a few dollars a week. Players who are willing to spend more money, and who want the "feel" of live interaction, have the option of meeting in GameSIG's multi-user conference area ("CO") for lengthy strategy discussions. If asked, the DM attends these conferences to answer questions.

Fantasy role-playing is now no longer limited to in-person sessions. Tele-gamers have the opportunity to create or join exciting online and message board games with FRPG'ers who live thousands of miles apart. The success and popularity of this mode of play is evidenced by the fact that new games are constantly being advertized on BBSs throughout the country, and more BBSs are being set up for the express purpose of providing a "playing field" for groups fantasy role-players.

To help you find a game, here are the modem numbers of some gaming bulletin board systems:

Lyceum—(213) 594-9062 (Long Beach, CA)
Teledunjon III—(214) 960-7654 (Dallas, TX)
The Keep—(408) 688-9629 (Aptos, CA)
The Safehouse—(612) 724-7066 (Minneapolis, MN)
Asgard—(817) 498-1746 (Ft. Worth, TX)

CompuServe's GameSIG is located on page GAM-310, and you can find out about subscribing to CompuServe by calling (voice) 800-848-8199.

As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions. You may write to me on CompuServe at 76703,657 or via U.S. Mail to:

Patricia Fitzgibbons
195 Claremont Avenue #115
Long Beach, CA 90803

QUESTRON (Cont.)

the others having "locked doors" It is in your hands to find the keys. (I bet you can't guess where they are).

I enjoyed the dungeons most of all. Gone are the straight walls with no life. Questrons' dungeons are in 3-D with rough stone walls and ceilings. They really look like dungeons. The doors, corridors, and stairwells all look believable. You are not only able to look down all the long halls but, if a creature approaches you from the distance, you can begin firing at it long before it gets within hurting range (You, of course, must have in your possession a weapon like the bow and arrow, as a sword will not work further than one space away. You have to complete all three dungeons before you are able to battle Mantor (if you give looking for them on land, remember that it is an island you are on).

Questron is one of the few games I have played that makes it well worth while playing to the end. The end does not fizzle. If you complete Questron you will really enjoy an ending fit for a king.

Need I say more? The instruction booklet gives you some tidbits of data and historical notes but as always most of the questions you have are left to be answered during game play. The game is enjoyable to play and the differences from the Ultima type game do make Questron refreshing. I await the sequels.

wearing them down. Moderate in villages means "ready for action". Bump into several natives and your men will draw swords! On rivers, moderate speed is the same as reckless, but with no added attrition.

Having gained experience in the historical Americas, I felt ready to tackle the next feature of the game, the *Random World Generator*. This procedure takes about 15 minutes, but creates land masses with swamps, native villages, mountains, plains, forrests, and rivers that have never been seen before. This sophisticated algorithm does not merely drop mountains, rivers, villages, etc. just anywhere on the land, but follows established geological rules of plate-techtonics and consults a cultural dissemination model for its work. You can even make copies of your random world and exchange them with your friends.

When a change is made from one sequence of the game to another, I was never left without a relevant message on the screen. There was never the usual *Please Wait!*, but pertinent information. All disk interaction was very fast, with the drive actually being noticed very seldom. The transfer menus all have appealing graphics designating the ships, the native villages, the expedition, the caches, the gold mines, the forts, and the missions. This made the menus not only informative at a glance, but enjoyable.

Excellent graphics give this game realism with easily recognized symbols for mountains, trees, swamps, and villages. The vegetation even changes colors as the seasons progress! The villages have different scenes depending upon their size—from the simple tepees of the small hunting tribes to the step-pyramids of the Aztec and Incan civilizations. In the historical world, most of the major rivers are represented, as are the Great Lakes, the Great Plains, the Grand Canyon, and the major mountain ranges. Gold mines (the term denotes any large treasure find) are even accurate in historical location. Topographic data depicting terrain, elevation, vegetation and rivers were particularly pleasing to view in the summary maps which show all of the territory explored. Just let the "demo" run and watch the complete map of the Western Hemisphere written to the screen....truely impressive!

Also, since SCOG is so believable as a historical and geographic simulation, it can be used quite easily as an educational tool. It doesn't teach, but rather allows the player (young or old) to learn while enjoying the game. My son had a great time reenacting the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Surprisingly, the amount of game time it took him to follow their path was very close to the actual historical time.

Seven Cities of Gold has such a varied offering that it is difficult to say just which aspects are best. Its mechanics run smoothly and add to the overall feeling of the game rather than act as the artificial actions found in some games.The color and variety of the graphics convey information in an eye pleasing manner. The total effect is the creation of a game which will continue to be enjoyed by the entire family for a very long time.

This calls for realistic strategies such as "leading" the enemy when firing (that is, shooting where he's going to be rather than where he is), waiting until the enemy is within close range, and conserving your ammo.

You can chose from five different air battles. In each you fly a different type of plane on a different kind of mission. In the *Battle for Pusan* (September 1952) you fly an F-80 Shooting Star against enemy YAK-9 fighter/bombers. In the *Sunchon Airdrop* (October 1950) you pilot a machine-gun armed C-119 transport plane while being accosted by YAK-9's. In both *Operation Strangle* (June 1951) and in *Sinuiju Airfield* (January 1951) you fly an F-86 Sabrejet against superior MIG-15's. And in the game's namesake, *Mig Alley* (December 1950), you pilot an F9F Panther against MIG-15's. The game documentation gives you just enough background on each of these battles, and on the Korean War in general, to make it interesting without bogging you down in unnecessary detail.

In general, you must perform realistic combat maneuvers to win in each of the different scenarios. That is, you make turning, diving, and climbing decisions based upon the type of aircraft that you are flying and the type of aircraft you are flying against. For example, you can turn faster than enemy bombers, but trying to out turn a MIG-15 is virtually useless — only fancy maneuvering and evasive action will do. Other realistic tactics include deliberately stalling (allowing the enemy to rapidly overtake you) or bailing out if your plane is damaged.

The screen flashes red when you're hit. If you plane is severely damaged, your power drops to zero. Your only hope is to try to ditch or to bail out. If the conditions are wrong, your ejection is fatal. However, even if they're right, you can still be notified that you were captured (and therefore, lose).

After you are shot down, you automatically assume control of another surviving plane in your squadron. You will get between 1200 and 2400 points per successful mission based upon the time used and the scenario's difficulty level. You are also rated as Novice, Wingman, Pilot, Ace, or WGFP (World's Greatest Fighter Pilot).

Each scenario ends in either a victory, loss, or "no result". A victory gives points to the plane that did the shooting, a loss reduces your number of lives, and no result gives no points. That means that, if you get shot down, your opponent gets victory points. But, if you bail out successfully, you do not loose a life. This scoring systems adds to the fun and logic of the play.

While this game lacks too many features to be called a true flight simulator (it has no attitude indicator, no "weather problems", no runways, no player control over ailerons and rudders, etc. . .), the excellent aerial dogfight action and Korean war setting make it worthy purchase for both the war gamer who is looking for a good arcade experience and for the arcader who is ready to go to war.


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TAKING A PEEK (Cont.)

SPITFIRE SIMULATOR: A combat flight simulator which has moving 3-D targets representing actual enemy aircraft types. The views seen by the user are like those from gun camera pictures taken from fighter planes in WWII. Apple. $40.00.

Quality Software
21601 Marilla St.
Chatsworth, CA 91311

THE RETURN OF HERACLES: "An exploration of Greek mythology translated into modern electronics" is how Quality Software describes the game. And the description is accurate. The player(s) take on the roles of Greek heros/heroines as they seek to fulfill the the tasks assigned by Zeus. An eleven page glossary as well as character charts for the over 250 different creatures you can encounter are provided in the documentation. Apple, Atari, C-64.

Rainbow Computing
8811 Amigo Ave.
Northridge, CA 91324

STELLAR DEFENSE: "Star Trek" type game with lots of little extras. You fight against the Sadic Empire as well as the Machiavellian Cartel (Nicolo would have been proud) as you attempt to make the galactic zone "safe for democracy". Ok, so it's a bit corny, but the game itself is nice if you like "Star Trek" type games. Apple.

Sierra On-Line
Sierra On-Line Building
Coarsegold, CA

WIZTYPE: Typing game using the Wizard of Id characters. Cartoon gags add extra life to the game. There are six modes and twenty levels of play. Several Systems.

Strategic Simulations
883 Stierlin Rd. Bld. A-200
Mountain View, CA 94043-1983

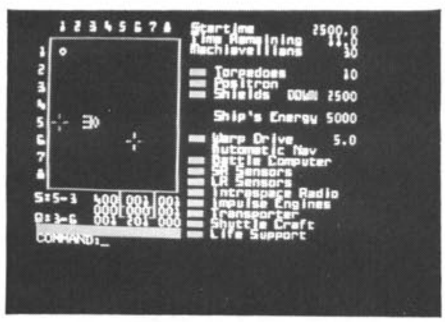
RAILS WEST: A economic game in which players deal in the financing and building of American transcontinental railroads. The play of the game involves accumulating cash, stocks, and bonds so as to control viable railroads. This is first and foremost an economic game, not a game of running the railroads. Great education values. Review coming. Apple and C-64. $39.95.

TG Software
1104 Summit Ave., Suite 110
Plano, TX 75074

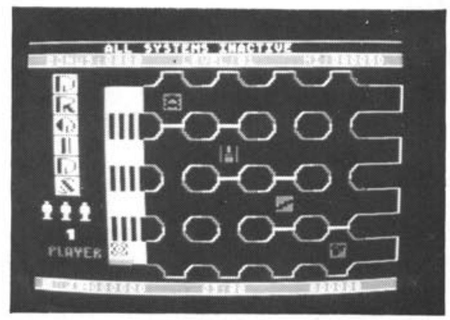
DROIDS: Arcade game in which you zap berserk droids on your spaceship. Seven play levels. ROM cartridge. Atari and Vic-20.

NIGHTSTRIKE: A shoot-em-out-of-the-sky game in which your mobile anti-aircraft tanks can move around to avoid the enemies bombs while you shoot them down. ROM cartridge. Atari and Vic-20.

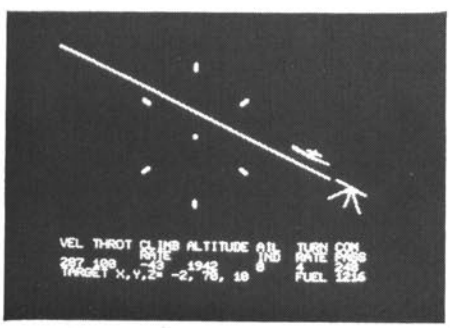




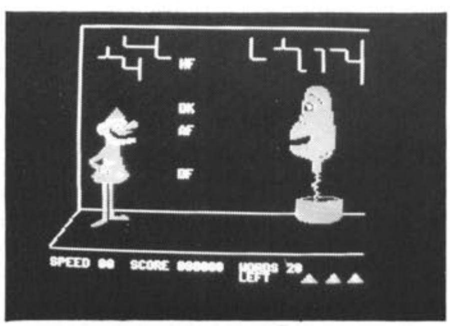
STELLAR DEFENSE



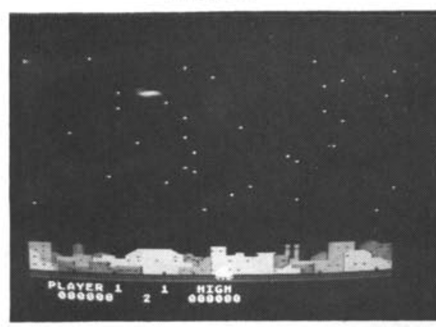
DROIDS



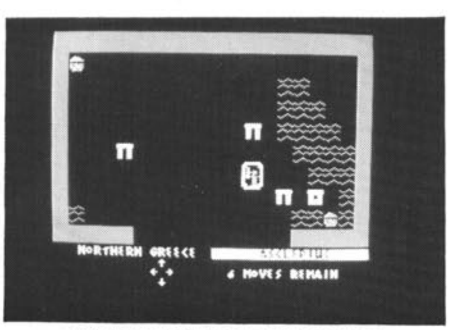
SPITFIRE SIMULATOR



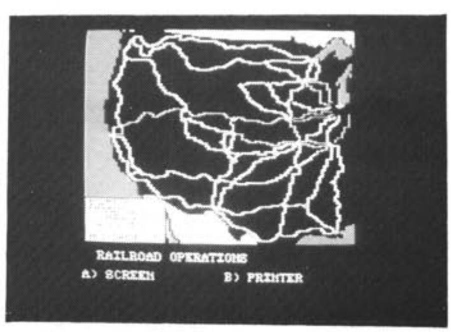
WIZTYPE



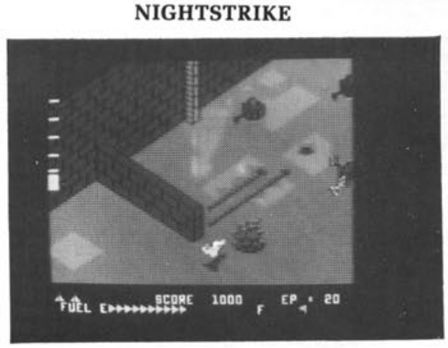
NIGHTSTRIKE



THE RETURN OF HERACLES



RAILS WEST



ZAXXON

Synapse Software
5221 Central Ave.
Richmond, CA 94804

ZAXXON: The C-64 version of the popular arcade game. Good graphics and sound as in other versions.

SLAMBALL: Scrolling pin-ball type game. Play-field is about four screens high. One joy-stick controls all paddles. C-64.

DataSoft, Inc.
19519 Business Center Dr.
Northridge, CA 91324

THE DALLAS QUEST: Adventure game based upon the well known TV series. Fun game with good sound (Dallas theme in four voices) and scrolling graphics. C-64.

Gamestar
1302 State St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

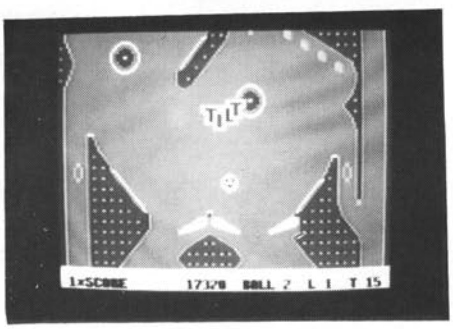
STAR LEAGUE BASEBALL: Excellent beer-and pretzels baseball game with graphics and sound as best features. Two player game good, but computer seems unbeatable. C-64.

LOR Inc.
Pt.4, Box 4363
Rigby, ID 83442

TERRAIN: Two player only tank arcade game. Basic graphics but with cute touches. C-64.

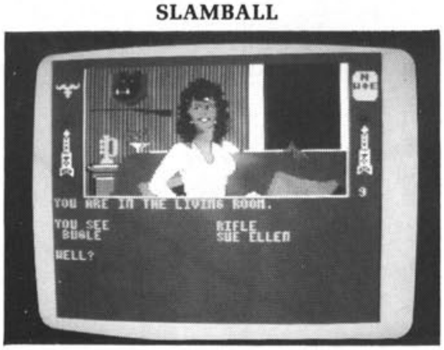
Access Software
925 East 900 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84105

BEACH HEAD: One or Two player arcade game. Multiple screen with exciting anamation and sound. Screens include anti-aircraft shooting, ship to ship firing, and many others. C-64.

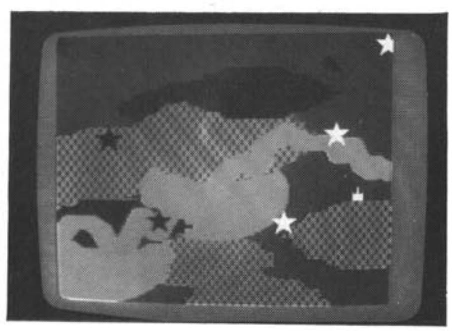


SLAMBALL

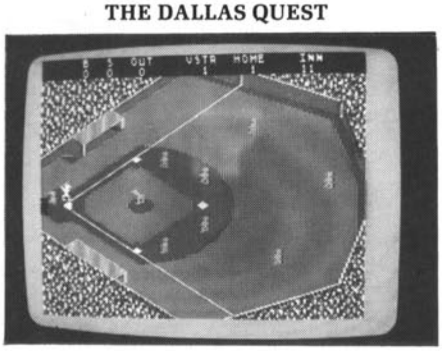
PLEASE TAKE TIME TO FILL OUT READER INPUT DEVICE



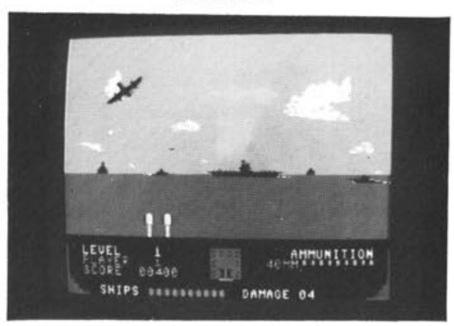
THE DALLAS QUEST



TERRAIN



STAR LEAGUE BASEBALL



BEACH HEAD

INDUSTRY NEWS (Cont.)

games will be available for the Apple and C-64 computers.

Strategic Simulations have announced the winner of their two **Fortress contests**. Dion Dosser of Reseda, CA won the Atari contest and Brent Bordic of Kingwood, TX won the Apple contest. Perhaps CGW should have a Fortress contest? What do you think?

SSI translations available now or very soon include: Fighter Command (C-64; Atari later); Geopolitique (C-64); Cosmic Balance (C-64); Fortress (C-64). **Objective:Kursk**, Gary Grigsby's new game for the Apple and Atari should be out by the time you read this. **War in Russia** is scheduled for an end of June release for the Atari and Apple at $79.95. Look for **Baltic 85** in late July. Note: In order to play RDF it is no longer necessary to buy Germany 1985. **Atari owners** can look for the following games now or soon: Questron, 50 Mission Crush, Broadsides, Galactic Adventures, Computer Baseball, Computer Ambush, and **Reforger 88** (a Fulda Gap game by Gary Grigsby).

According to a recent study by TALMIS, Inc., a market research company for the personal computer industry, 25% of all U.S. households contain at least one member who uses a personal computer at work or at school. More than 20% of all households with children have at least one child using the computer at school.

Screenplay has released **INSTITUTE**, a psychological drama for the Apple, Atari, and C-64. In true Freudian fashion, the clues to your escape can only be found through a series of four dreams, induced by a mysterious red powder. In the Institute, you may find yourself in a prehistoric jungle, of aboard the doomed Titanic. Each dream provides you with information and items you will need to escape. List Price: $29.95.

Six great games to make you really glad you own the COMMODORE 64.™

Playing games is probably one of the main reasons you bought the computer you did — the COMMODORE 64.™ When it comes to games, there are none more sophisticated, challenging — and just plain fun — than the strategy games from SSI.

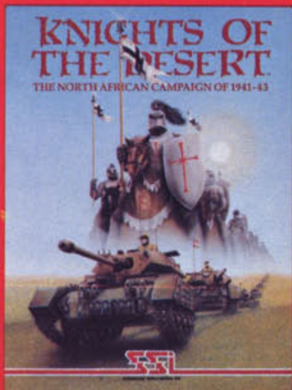
We made our considerable reputation by producing some of the finest games for the Apple.® To make sure all you C-64 owners out there don't get left out, we're converting as many of our games to your favorite computer as we possibly can.

Here are just six of our ever-increasing line of C-64 games. Best of all, they're all waiting for you at your nearest computer/software or game store — today!

Our games are covered under a 14-day "satisfaction or your money back" guarantee.

1.

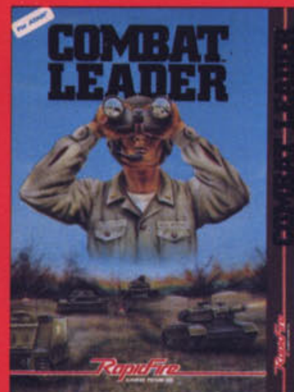
The North African Campaign of 1941-42 is faithfully recreated here. Just as knights on tall horses rode out on the First Crusade nearly a millenium ago, you'll have a chance to ride in your Crusader tanks against the invading Nazi forces. Disk & cassette. $39.95





2.

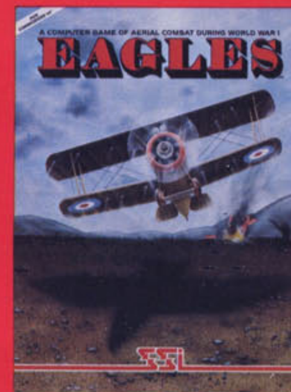
Here's a real-time wargame that gives you the speed of arcade games and sophistication of strategy games. It is one of the finest and fastest tank-battle games ever made. You can choose from over 70 tanks, from the Nazi Tiger to the Abrams M-1. Disk & cassette. $39.95





3.

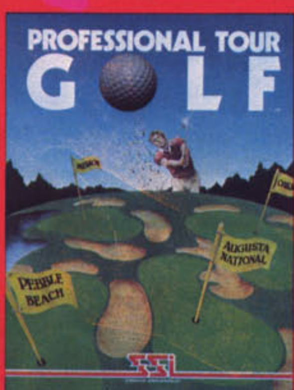
Take to the skies with your trusty Sopwith Camel or Fokker DR-1 or any number of World War I planes. You can set up duels between two planes or stage grand dogfights involving as many as 20 planes. On disk. $39.95





4.

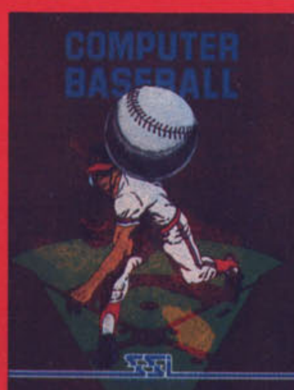
If you've ever dreamed of playing the pro-tour golf circuit on the world's finest courses with the likes of Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus this game is your dream-come-true. The famous Pebble Beach course is faithfully reproduced. This is golf simulation at its best! On disk. $39.95

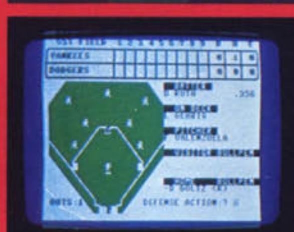




5.

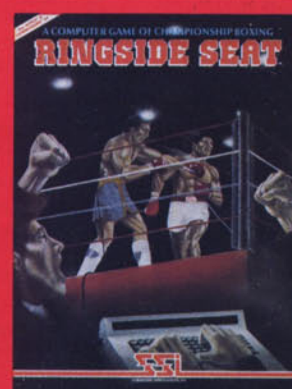
Voted "1982 BEST COMPUTER SPORTS GAME" by Electronic Games magazine, Compute Baseball™ lets you manage any NL and AL teams of past and present. All the options of a real manager are at your disposal. You can even make up your own imaginary teams! On disk. $39.95





6.

You can set up your own championship bouts using real champs to answer the age-old question: Who really was the greatest of all time? Could Joe Louis outwit Muhammed Ali? Could Jack Dempsey outslug Larry Holmes? Best of all, you get to manage! On disk. $39.95





Screen displays are not necessarily from the Commodore 64.™

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS INC

If there are no convenient stores near you, VISA & Mastercard holders can order direct by calling **800-227-1617, ext. 335 (toll free).** In California, call 800-772-3545, ext. 335.

To order by mail, send your check to: STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS INC, 883 Stierlin Road, Bldg. A-200, Mountain View, CA 94043. (California residents, add 6.5% sales tax.)

WRITE FOR A FREE COLOR CATALOG OF ALL OUR GAMES.

READER INPUT DEVICE

There were 312 RIDs turned in by press time for this issue.

Newly rated games and updated game ratings are listed with **bold type** in the table on page 47.

According to the results from RID #13 the average age of a CGW reader is 32 years. By coincidence the editor of CGW is 32 years old. Talk about writing for a narrow audience! The range was 5 years old to 67 years young.

The average reader of CGW spends $54 per month on computer games. The breakdown by machine was: Atari — 45%; Apple — 43%; C-64 — 9%.

GAME RATINGS

The table on page 47 includes games evaluated by our readers. For a game to be included in this listing it must first have been offered for rating in our regular RID rating system. Games offered for evaluation are those covered in the magazine and/or those having a good sales record during the time of evaluation. Once offered for evaluation, the game must have been evaluated by a sufficient number of readers to be included in the results. Any game not evaluated by at least 10% of the respondents was not included in the results.

Games were rated on a scale of 1 (terrible) to 9 (outstanding). Respondents were asked to consider such things as PRESENTATION (graphics, sound, packaging, documentation); GAME DESIGN (design, playability, interesting?); LIFE (does the game wear well?)

Several people have asked about games that are offered for ratings more than once over the course of several issues. We usually re-rate the top ten each time (and sometimes other games as well). Please rate the game each time we ask (not just the first time you notice it in the R.I.D.).

RID #14 (Use card provided)

On this page a number of games and articles are listed for evaluation. Please take time to evaluate these games and articles. Use the guidelines above for game evaluation. Leave blank any game which you have not played enough to have formed an opinion.

Please rate articles on the basis of the article itself, not your opinion of the game being reviewed. Enter a zero for any article that does not interest you.

***INSIDE INDUSTRY* SURVEY**

Questions 1 through 10 relate to the INSIDE THE INDUSTRY survey questions as detailed on page 12 of this issue. Part I requires that you place the appropriate letter in the space for question #1. Part II requires that you check the appropriate numbers on the R.I.D. card (2–7). Part III requires that you write the appropriate number in the space for question #8. Part IV requires that you write in the number of computer games that you buy per month in question 9. Question 10 relates to Part V and asks for the number of games copied per month.

GAMES

11. Ultima III (Origin)
12. M.U.L.E. (EA)
13. Archon (EA)
14. Flight Sim. II (SubLogic)
15. Wizardry (Sir-Tech)
16. Carrier Force (SSI)
17. Computer Baseball (SSI)
18. One on One (EA)
19. Knight of Diamonds (Sir-Tech)
20. Knights of the Desert (SSI)
21. Legacy of Llygamyn (Sir-Tech)
22. Sorcerer (Infocom)
23. Seven Cities of Gold (EA)
24. Universe (Omnitrend)
25. Questron (SSI)
26. Mig Alley Ace (Microprose)
27. Tycoon (Blue Chip)
28. Baron (Blue Chip)
29. Broadsides (SSI)
30. Chancellor Exchequer (Mach-Ina)
31. Under Southern Skies (Avalon Hill)
32. Jupiter Mission 1999 (Avalon Hill)

ARTICLES

33. Seven Cities of Gold
34. Scorpion's Tale
35. Universe reviews
36. Questron reviews
37. Telegaming
38. Commodore Key
39. Atari Playfield
40. Learning Game

MISCELLANEOUS

41. Where did you buy this issue of CGW? A. Subscriber B. Computer Store C. Bookstore D. Other
42. What computer do you own? 1 = Apple; 2 = Atari; 3 = C64; 4 = Vic-20; 5 = IBMpc; 6 = CoCo; 7 = Other (Please specify)

Use A, B, C for "letter to editor" space. (If you write a letter to the editor, please include your name and address.

READER INPUT DEVICE

R.I.D. was prepared with the help of SPEED STAT by SoftCorp International, Westerville, OH 800-543-1350

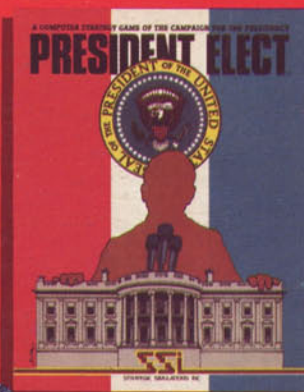
See page 46 for details on the Reader Input Device

Game Ratings

7.89	**Ultima III**	**Origin**	**Apple**
7.77	**M.U.L.E.**	**Electronic Arts**	**Atari, C-64**
7.52	**Archon**	**Electronic Arts**	**Atari**
7.47	**Flight Simulator II**	**Sublogic**	**Apple, C-64**
7.41	**Wizardry**	**Sir-Tech**	**Apple, IBM**
7.34	**Carrier Force**	**SSI**	**Atari**
7.31	**Computer Baseball**	**SSI**	**Apple, C-64**
7.28	**One on One**	**Electronic Arts**	**Apple, C-64**
7.09	Knight of Diamonds	Sir-tech	Apple
7.09	Knights of the Desert	SSI	Many
7.07	Lode Runner	Broderbund	Many
7.05	The Cosmic Balance	SSI	Apple, Atari
7.04	Blue Max	Synapse	Atari
7.04	Pinball Construction	Electronic Arts	Apple, Atari
7.03	Choplifter!	Broderbund	Many
7.00	Guadalcanal Campaign	SSI	Apple
7.00	Music Construction	Electronic Arts	Apple, Atari
7.00	North Atlantic 1986	SSI	Apple
7.00	Operation Whirlwind	Broderbund	Atari
6.98	Southern Command	SSI	Apple
6.97	Olympic Decathlon	Microsoft	Apple
6.96	Geopolitique	SSI	Apple
6.94	Shattered Alliance	SSI	Apple, Atari
6.93	**Combat Leader**	**SSI**	**Atari, C-64**
6.93	Galactic Gladiators	SSI	Apple
6.93	Star Blazer	Broderbund	Apple
6.92	Infidel	Infocom	Many
6.92	Starcross	Infocom	Many
6.92	The Quest	Penguin	Apple, Atari
6.91	Castle Wolfenstein	Muse	Apple
6.91	Deadline	Infocom	Many
6.91	The Warp Factor	SSI	Apple, IBM
6.89	Necromancer	Synapse	Atari
6.88	Cartels & Cutthroats	SSI	Apple
6.87	Crisis Mountain	Synergistic	Apple
6.87	Miner 2049er	Big 5/Microfon	Apple, Atari
6.87	Planetfall	Infocom	Many
6.86	Pursuit of Graf Spee	SSI	Apple
6.85	**Excalibur**	**APX**	**Atari**
6.84	Battle for Normandy	SSI	Apple, Atari
6.82	Computer Ambush	SSI	Apple
6.82	Cytron Masters	SSI	Apple, Atari
6.82	Germany 1985	SSI	Apple
6.81	Championship Golf	Hayden	Apple
6.81	Chess 7.0	Odesta	Many
6.81	Fighter Command	SSI	Apple
6.81	Ultima II	Sierra On-Line	Apple, Atari
6.77	Galactic Adventures	SSI	Apple
6.76	Rendezvous	Edu-Ware	Apple
6.76	Shamus	Synapse	Many
6.75	Reach for the Stars	SSG	Apple, C-64
6.75	President Elect	SSI	Apple
6.73	Star Maze	Sir-tech	Apple
6.67	Computer Gin Rummy	Datamost	Apple
6.66	Astro Chase	First Star	Atari
6.66	Napoleon's Campaigns	SSI	Apple
6.66	**Eastern Front (2nd ed.)**	**Atari**	**Atari**
6.65	**Murder on the Zinderneuf**	**Electronic Arts**	**Atari, C-64**
6.65	Escape from Rungistan	Sirius	Apple
6.61	Witness	Infocom	Many
6.60	Ali Baba/40 Thieves	Quality	Apple, Atari
6.59	**Robotwar**	**Muse**	**Apple**
6.58	Suspended	Infocom	Many
6.57	Hard Hat Mack	Electronic Arts	Apple
6.56	David's Midnight Magic	Broderbund	Many
6.54	Bomb Alley	SSI	Apple
6.54	Ultima I	Cal Pacific	Apple
6.51	Broadsides	SSI	Apple
6.50	Sherwood Forest	Phoenix	Apple
6.50	**Jumpman**	**Epyx**	**Atari**
6.47	Epidemic	SSI	Apple, IBM
6.46	Ringside Seat	SSI	Apple, C64
6.45	Soloflight	Microprose	Atari
6.45	Worms	Electronic Arts	Atari
6.44	**Legionnaire**	**Avalon Hill**	**Atari, Apple**
6.43	**Under Southern Skies**	**Avalon Hill**	**Apple**
6.41	**Mig Alley Ace**	**Microprose**	**Atari**
6.40	Apventure to Atlantis	Synergistic	Apple
6.40	Tigers in the Snow	SSI	Many
6.39	Galactic Attack	Sir-tech	Apple
6.39	Drol	Broderbund	Many
6.33	Starbowl Football	Gamester	Atari
6.29	Paris In Danger	Avalon Hill	Atari
6.28	Temple of Apshai	Epyx	Many
6.27	Mask of Sun	Ultra Soft	Apple
6.26	Swashbuckler	Datamost	Apple
6.21	Crush, Crumble Chomp	Epyx	Many
6.20	Zaxxon	Datasoft	Many
6.19	NATO Commander	Microprose	Atari
6.17	Fortress	SSI	Atari
6.17	Frogger	Sierra On-Line	Apple, Atari
6.16	A2-PB1 Pinball	SubLogic	Apple
6.15	Cannonball Blitz	Sierra On-Line	Apple
6.07	Old Ironsides	Xerox	Apple
6.02	Way Out	Sirius	Apple, Atari
6.00	Cosmic Balance II	SSI	Apple, Atari
6.00	Empire of the Overmind	Avalon Hill	Many
6.00	**Tactical Armor Command**	**Avalon Hill**	**Apple**
6.00	Rainbow Walker	Synapse	Atari
6.00	Spy's Demise	Penguin	Apple, Atari
5.99	Swordthrust Series	CE Software	Apple
5.94	Labyrinth	Broderbund	Apple
5.92	Time Zone	Sierra On-Line	Apple
5.89	Bilestoad	Datamost	Apple
5.87	Marauder	Sierra On-Line	Apple, Atari
5.84	Close Assault	Avalon Hill	Many
5.79	A.E.	Broderbund	Apple
5.79	Aztec	Datamost	Apple
5.77	Snack Attack	Datamost	Apple
5.77	Torpedo Fire	SSI	Apple
5.77	Beachhead	Access	C-64
5.76	The Arcade Machine	Broderbund	Apple
5.75	Battle of Shiloh	SSI	Many
5.70	Serpentine	Broderbund	Apple, Atari
5.68	Andromeda Conquest	Avalon Hill	Many
5.67	Blade of Blackpoole	Sirius	Many
5.36	Gruds in Space	Sirius	Many
5.33	Mr. Robot	Datamost	Atari

All roads to the best strategy games for the APPLE® lead to SSI.

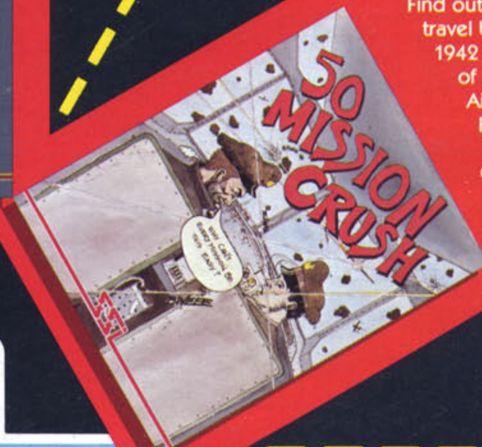
With the election coming up, PRESIDENT ELECT™ is perfect for all armchair politicians. Every major electoral parameter has been duplicated to make this game the most realistic model of the campaign process ever made! On 48K disk. $39.95.



As the hero in this fantasy adventure role-playing game, you must battle hordes of deadly monsters as you seek out to destroy the evil wizard, Mantor. Use your strength, dexterity, intelligence and charisma to the fullest in your treacherous journey to save the Questron Empire. On 48K disk. $49.95.



As the pilot of a World War II B-17 bomber in this role-playing game, can you survive 50 dangerous but exciting raids over France and Germany to earn the crushed cap of a true veteran? Find out as you travel back to 1942 as part of the 8th Air Force Bomber Group. On 48K disk. $39.95.



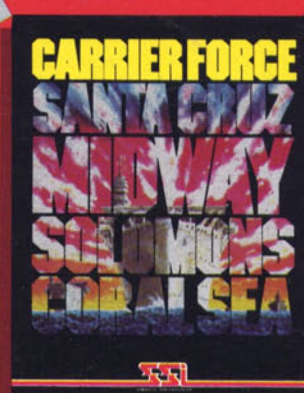
STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS INC.



15 months of development time have gone into this game to make it the definitive division-level simulation of the Russian War. You can re-enact the entire campaign from June 1941 through December 1944 or select one of 3 shorter scenarios. If you call yourself a real wargamer, you must play it! On 48K disk. $79.95.



RAILS WEST!™ is a sophisticated business/educational game that takes you back to 1870. You'll wheel and deal as you try to build the richest Transcontinental railroad. For up to 8 players, it is fun, challenging, and exhaustive in detail and realism. On 48K disk. $39.95.



CARRIER FORCE™ is the WWII simulation of the major flat-top battles fought in the Pacific when the U.S. and Japan were still evenly matched in naval power. It is so detailed, every ship and plane is taken into account. It is one monster of a game in scale, yet it's so easy to play! On 48K disk. $59.95.

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